ELLE®

APRIL 2023 £4.99

New Romance

THE RISE OF SOFT-GIRL STYLE

+

PLEASURE IN A SEX RECESSION

THE EUPHORIA OF HUNTER SCHAFER

VISIT…

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

Creating infinity

Creating infinity

Creating infinity
Yayoi Kusama
LOUIS VUITTON

DIOR.COM - 020 7172 0172

DIOR

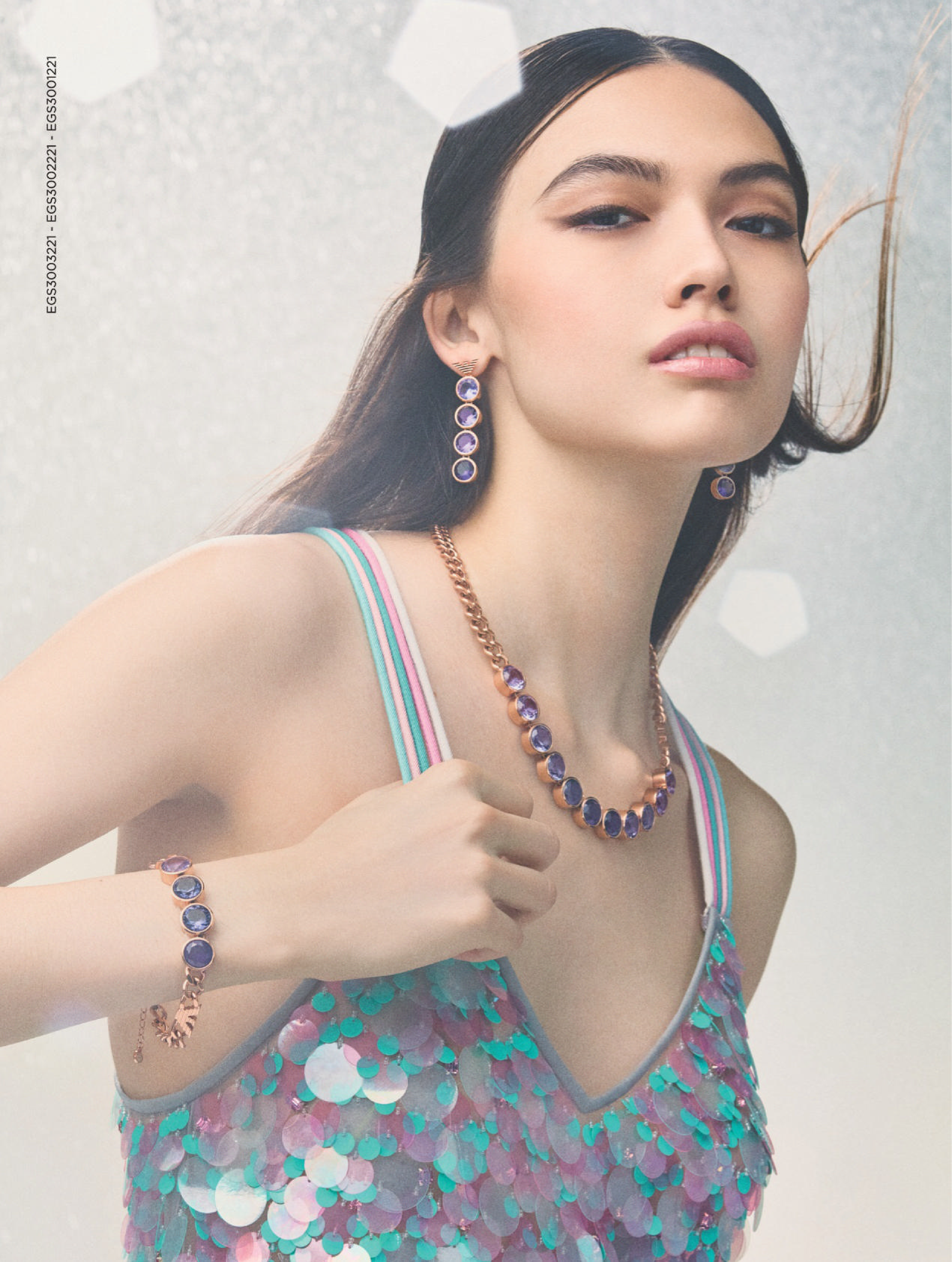
CELINE
CELINE
CE

CELINE

CELINE.COM

PRADA
MILANO

PRADA.COM
PRADA



EGS3003221 - EGS3002221 - EGS3001221

EGS3014221 - EGS3013SET - EGS3015221
EMPORIO ARMANI

©TIFFANY & Co. Au 750 ITALY
©TIFFANY & Co. Au 7
LOCK COLLECTION
TIFFANY & Co.

Tiffany.com | © 2023 T&CO.

FENDI.COM

Shop at omegawatches.com

SEAMASTER AQUA TERRA SHADES
Co-Axial Master Chronometer

EVERY SHADE OF YOU

With the Aqua Terra Shades collection, Zoë Kravitz has embraced the power of colour to express her personal style. Just like the multi-talented star, these OMEGA watches are infused with confidence, offering a variety of tones to match the mood you're in. Discover the 34 mm range in stainless steel, which includes five exclusive choices, all backed by the trusted precision of a Co-Axial Master Chronometer movement. Whichever look you desire, there's a shade to tell your story.

Ω
OMEGA

#AquaTerraShades

CHRONOMAT

The Spotlight Squad

Misty Copeland

BREITLING
1884
#SQUADONAMISSION
BREITLING
1884
CHRONOMETER
CHRONOMAT

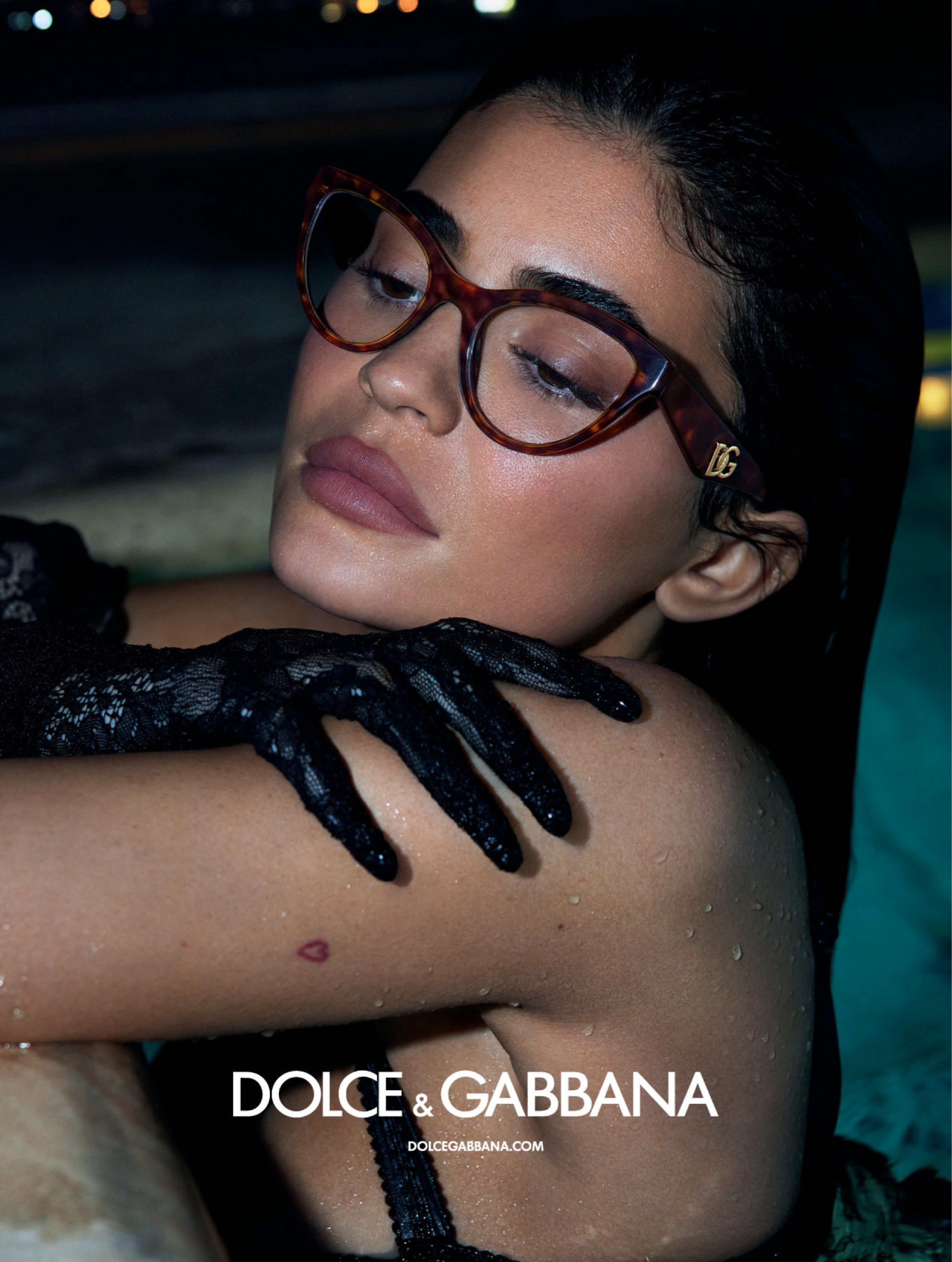
Spring / Summer 2023

Explore **JOLIN** *ballerina flats* at vagabond.com

VAGABOND
SHOEMAKERS

LIBRE
YVES SAINT LAURENT
THE ORIGINAL EAU DE PARFUM
YSLBEAUTY.COM
DUA LIPA

YSL



DOLCE & GABBANA
DOLCEGABBANA.COM

contents

April_2023

PAGE 74

ELLE
New Romance
THE RISE OF SOFT-GIRL STYLE
+
PLEASURE IN A SEX RECESSION
THE EUPHORIA OF HUNTER SCHAFER

ON THE COVER

HUNTER SCHAFER
JACKET: MUGLER.
PHOTOGRAPH: PAOLA KUDACKI.
STYLING: CAROLINA ORRICO.
HAIR: LACY REDWAY.
MAKE-UP: CAROLINA DALI AT THE WALL GROUP.
NAILS: CASEY HERMAN AT THE WALL GROUP.
FASHION ASSISTANTS: GRACE CLARKE AND ALYSSA MOSLEY
SET DESIGN: CAZ SLATTERY AT CLM.
PRODUCTION: HEATHER ROBBINS AND MARY GOUGHNOUR AT CLM

PHOTOGRAPH: LULU McARDLE

EVERY MONTH

41
EDITOR'S LETTER
Kenya Hunt introduces this issue's theme: the power of love

50
THE MOMENT
Camille Charrière explains why the barely-there sheer dress is a win for radical self-acceptance

53
AGENDA
Transformers, balletcore and a fresh rom-com: all-new must-sees

194
FINAL WORD
More is more, says *Lena Dunham*, on her joyful style

FIRST LOOK

59
Culture and fashion picks: normcore, the suit returns and the call of the wild

STYLE + SHOP

74
NEW IN
Monochrome tones plus fierce accessories equals instant impact

80
THE EDIT
Style solutions for looking slick no matter the weather

89
THE PIECE
Heels meet horticulture in Loewe's ultra-realistic botanical beauties

90
TREND REPORT
Colour-block pastels that segue seamlessly from work to play

92
JEWELLERY
Forget delicate: this spring, it's all about bold, look-at-me bling

READS

98
LEANING IN
From *Euphoria* to the big screen and beyond – the unstoppable rise of Hunter Schafer

132
THE PLAY'S THE THING
After 10 years at Loewe, Jonathan Anderson is having more fun, and ideas, than ever

136
LESS IS MORE
Katie O'Malley investigates the truth about the Great Sex Recession and hook-ups today

140
SHE WHO DARES
Three brides unveil their deeply personal weddings, with fashion at the heart of the celebrations

146
THE FIRSTS THAT MADE ME
Writers recall their amorous awakenings

152
THE GOSPEL OF JULIA FOX
Life is one long live-stream for the New York phenomenon. With star-status under her belt, what's next?

contents

PAGE 122

PAGE 80

FASHION

110
A SOFT LIFE
Florals are front and centre this season, bringing romance and charm – just mix in some hard-edged accessories for a winning blend

122
THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE
Light up your life in silvery shades and the sheerest, sparkliest materials

BEAUTY + WELLNESS

158
THE SKINCARE A-Z
Cutting-edge products and treatments for enhancing every skin type

164
RADAR
Radiance-boosting make-up, seaweed-based products and scalp-supporting haircare – new ELLE-approved beauty buys

166
THE EDITORS ON… FACE TOOLS
Whatever your skin concern, there's a gadget that can help, and our experts have selected the best

172
HEALTH IS WEALTH?
Is 'wellness' all it's cracked up to be? *Jennifer George* is unpersuaded, and has some (inexpensive) suggestions for truly feeling good

177
10 OF THE BEST… SERUMS
Brightening, plumping, dark-spot banishing – there's a formula that can help, whatever the issue may be

IN + OUT

180
THE INTERIOR LIFE OF… RONAN McKENZIE
The multi-talented artist and designer shows ELLE round her carefully curated apartment in London

183
INTERIOR TRENDS
It's the colour of passion, and a shot of red in the form of these desirable pieces will add extra appeal to your home

184
THE NEW NEW YORK
Eni Subair finds the Big Apple buzzing: more exciting than ever and channelling its 1970s glory days

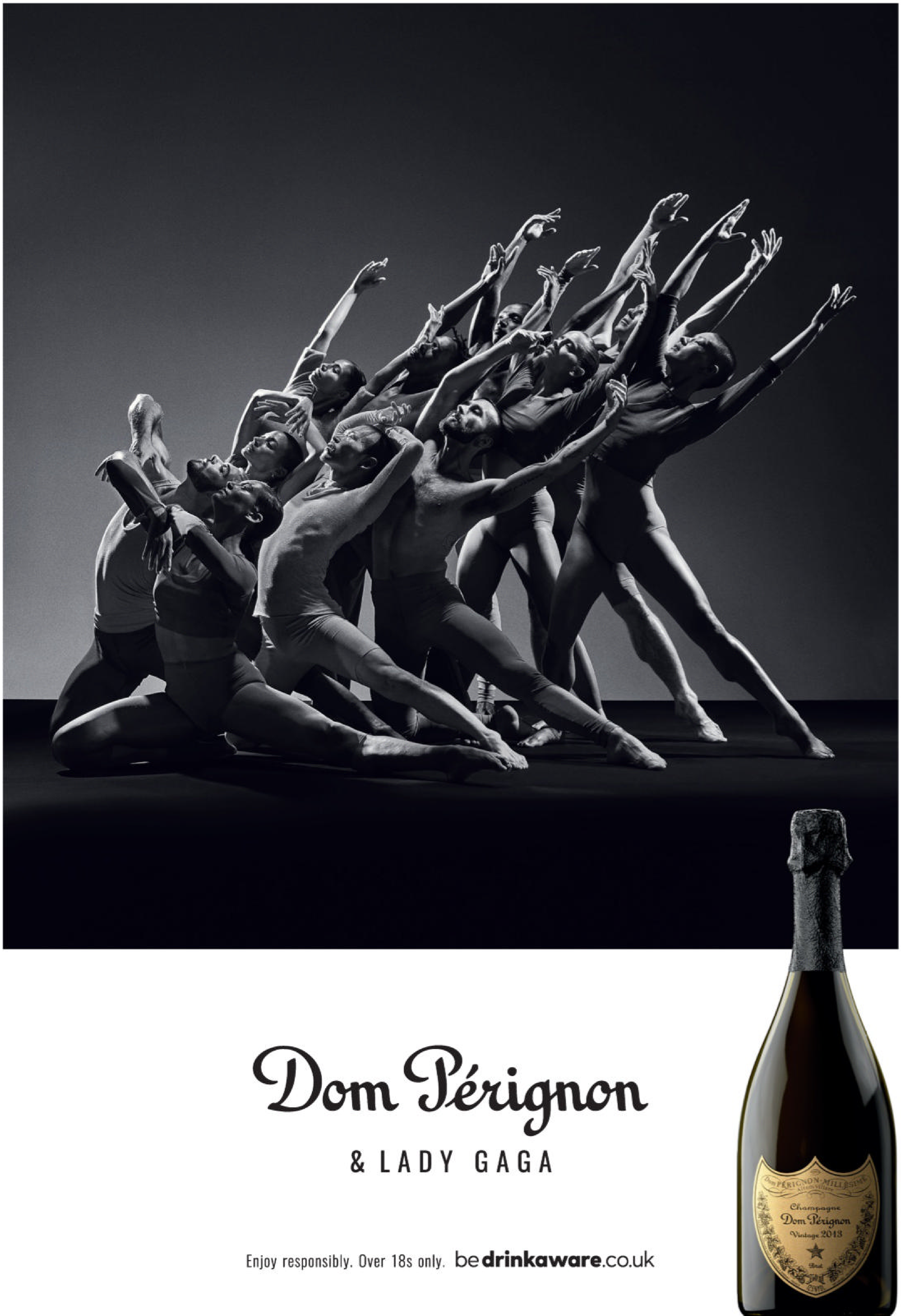
188
ON LOCATION
In Paris, Los Angeles and Milan, these are the chicest spots where the ELLE editors stay on their travels

190
POSTCARD FROM… MEXICO CITY
Tamales, tacos and artisan markets: chef Ixta Belfrage shares inside info on where to eat and what to see

PHOTOGRAPHS: EKUA KING, DIMA HOHLOV

BVLGARI.COM

BVLGARI
ROMA


Dom Pérignon Millésime
Champagne
Dom Pérignon
Vintage 2013
Brut

Dom Pérignon

& LADY GAGA

Enjoy responsibly. Over 18s only. bedrinkaware.co.uk

MAXMARA.COM

MaxMara

ELLE

Editor-in-Chief, ELLE and ELLE.com/uk
KENYA HUNT

Luxury Creative Director TOM USHER
Executive Editor ALICE WIGNALL
Executive Editor (Digital) NATASHA BIRD

Editorial Business Director CONNIE OSBORNE
Workflow Director CARLY LEVY

FASHION
Group Luxury Fashion Director AVRIL MAIR
Bookings Director CHLOË RIDLEY
Bookings Editor LAURA NICHOLSON
Bookings Assistant TOM CASEY
Fashion Editors GEORGIA MEDLEY, ROSIE ARKELL-PALMER, TILLY WHEATING
Digital Fashion Editor DAISY MURRAY
Acting Digital Fashion Editor CLEMENTINA JACKSON
Senior Fashion Co-ordinator NATALIE ZANNIKOS
Senior Fashion Assistant HOLLY GORST
Fashion Cupboard Manager HANNAH AKANDE
Fashion Assistants GRACE CLARKE, CRYSTALLE COX, GAL KLEIN

FEATURES
Associate Editor/Culture Director LENA DE CASPARIS
Features Director HANNAH NATHANSON
Talent Director LOTTIE LUMSDEN
Deputy Digital Editor KATIE O'MALLEY
Fashion News Editor ENI SUBAIR
Digital News Editor SAKAYNAH HUNTER
Talent Editor OLIVIA BLAIR
Editorial Intern EVE WALKER

Head of Social Media, Luxury AMY BREWSTER

BEAUTY
Group Luxury Beauty Director KATY YOUNG
Beauty Editor JENNIFER GEORGE *Digital Beauty Editor* GEORGE DRIVER
Senior Beauty Assistant MEDINA AZALDIN
Beauty Assistant KATIE WITHINGTON

EDITORIAL PRODUCTION
Group Luxury Chief Sub-Editor/Production Editor DOM PRICE
Deputy Chief Sub-Editors CAITLIN BUTLER, CAMILLA REDMOND
Sub-Editor DINA NAGAPETYANTS

ART AND PICTURES
Art Directors LISA BARLOW-WRIGHT, ZOYA KALEEVA
Acting Art Director LAUREN JONES
Art Editor LEANNE ROBSON
Acting Art Editor AMY BLACKER
Acting Senior Designer EMILY LORD
Designers LILY PICHON FLANNERY, SONIA RUPRAH
Acting Designer LISIANE DRESSLER
Picture Director SIÂN PARRY
Picture Editor LIZ PEARN
Picture Production Editor GEMMA ROBERTS
Picture Researcher ABI HOLLISTER
Picture Assistant LEILA FREDRICHSEN

CONTRIBUTING FASHION EDITORS
AURELIA DONALDSON, BETH FENTON, SOLANGE FRANKLIN, JENNY KENNEDY

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
JESSICA ANDREWS, AJA BARBER, IXTA BELFRAGE, CAMILLE CHARRIÈRE, EMMA DABIRI, AINDREA EMELIFE,
LYNETTE NYLANDER, SHARMADEAN REID, DR EWOMA UKELEGHE, BERNI YATES

For advertising enquiries, call 020 3728 7713 *or email* SHARON.DAVIES-RIDGEWAY@HEARST.CO.UK
For all PR enquiries, email MEDIA@HEARST.CO.UK
For all event enquiries, call 020 7312 4105
For all general enquiries, call 020 7439 5000

AVAILABLE AT DIOR.COM
Miss Dior
BLOOMING BOUQUET
Miss Dior
BLOOMING BOUQUET

DIOR

Chief Luxury Officer
JACQUELINE EUWE

Executive Assistant to the Chief Luxury Officer NATASHA MANN

Group Brand Director, Luxury SHARON DAVIES-RIDGEWAY
Head of Luxury Fashion CHARLOTTE HOLLANDS
Luxury Fashion Sales Executive BERNARD GARBY
Acting Director of Watches and Jewellery ANNA O'SULLIVAN
Watches and Jewellery Client Manager OLIVIA HORROCKS-BURNS
Watches and Jewellery Manager SHREYAAL HIRANI SHAH

Head of Fashion, Beauty and Luxury SARAH TSIRKAS
Director of Beauty LEE BAILEY
Director of Health and Wellness CHRIS HEALY
Director of Travel DENISE DEGROOT
Head of Finance and Motors MICHELLE PAGLIARULO
Head of Agency Sales, UK and Global BEN CHESTERS
Head of Regional LISA BHATTI
Sales Director, Classified Advertising LEE RIMMER
(LEE.RIMMER@CANOPYMEDIA.CO.UK)
Regional Group Business Director DANIELLE SEWELL
Head of Digital RYAN BUCKLEY

Executive Creative Director MARK McCAFFERTY
Senior Connect Director BETHANY SUTTON
Senior Connect Manager CONNIE FFITCH
Director of Commercial Production WILL VILLE
Branded Content Lead JAMIE CARSON
Art Director, Branded Content MAIREAD GLEESON

Head of Media Planning LUCY PORTER
Senior Media Planning Manager KATHRYN FAIRBAIRN
Production Director JOHN HUGHES *Production Manager* STEPHEN OSBORNE

Chief Consumer Revenue Officer REID HOLLAND
Circulation and Subscriptions Director JAMES HILL
Digital Marketing and CRM Director SEEMA KUMARI
Head of Product and Promotions AOIBHEANN FOLEY
Head of Subscriptions JUSTINE BOUCHER

Head of PR and Communications BEN BOLTON
PR and Communications Manager CRISTINA WYATT

HEARST UK
Chief Executive Officer KATIE VANNECK-SMITH
Chief International Brand Officer MATT HAYES *Chief Commercial Officer* JANE WOLFSON
Chief Commercial Operations Director GIANLUCA ENA
Chief People Officer SURINDER SIMMONS
Digital Development Director MATT HILL
Finance Director, Hearst UK JULIEN LITZELMANN
Business Strategy Director, Hearst UK ROMAIN METRAS
Director of Operations, Hearst UK SOPHIE WILKINSON
Director of PR and Communications ALISON FORTH

HEARST MAGAZINES INTERNATIONAL
President, Hearst Magazines International JONATHAN WRIGHT
Senior Vice-President/Editorial and Brand Director KIM ST CLAIR BODDEN
Executive Director, Luxury Brands ELEONORE MARCHAND

ELLE INTERNATIONAL: A DIVISION OF LAGARDÈRE NEWS
CEO CONSTANCE BENQUÉ
CEO ELLE International Licenses FRANÇOIS CORUZZI
SVP/International Director of ELLE VALÉRIA BESSOLO LLOPIZ

ELLE BRAND MANAGEMENT
Marketing Director MORGANE ROHÉE
Digital & Graphic Design Director MARINE LE BRIS
Database Manager PASCAL IACONO

ELLE INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTIONS
Fashion Editor CHARLOTTE DEFFE *Beauty & Celebrity Editor* VIRGINIE DOLATA

ELLE SYNDICATION
Syndication Director SÉVERINE LAPORTE *Syndication Coordinator* ANA AFONSO
Copyrights Manager KENZA ALLAL

International Ad Sales House: LAGARDÈRE GLOBAL ADVERTISING
SVP/International Advertising JULIAN DANIEL *jdaniel@lagarderenews.com*

ELLE is a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (which regulates the UK's magazine and newspaper industry). We abide by the Editors' Code of Practice and are committed to upholding the highest standards of journalism. If you think that we have not met those standards and want to make a complaint please contact complaints@hearst.co.uk or visit hearst.co.uk/hearst-magazines-uk-complaints-procedure. If we are unable to resolve your complaint, or if you would like more information about IPSO or the Editors' Code, contact IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or visit ipso.co.uk. For subscription queries, contact our customer service team at hearstmagazines.co.uk/contact-us or call 01858 438796. Lines open weekdays, 8am-9.30pm; Saturdays, 8am-4pm. Magazine printed by Walstead Roche, St Austell. Distribution by Frontline Ltd, Peterborough (01733 555161)

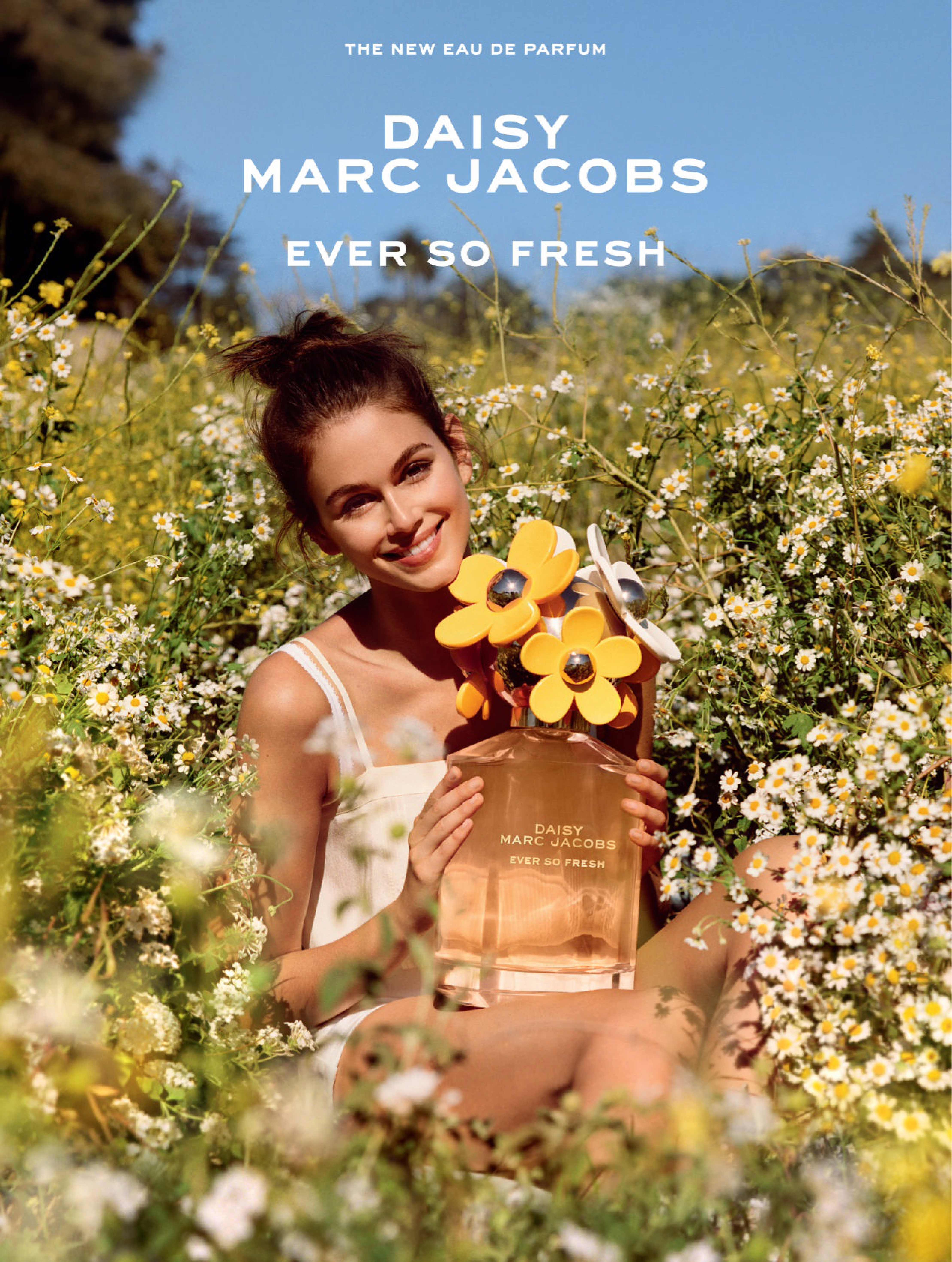
L'INTERDIT
GIVENCHY

MUGLER
ANGEL
ELIXIR
THE NEW FRAGRANCE
REFILLABLE

HUNTER SCHAFER MUGLER.CO.U

RALPH
LAUREN

POLO
POLO
RL


THE NEW EAU DE PARFUM
DAISY
MARC JACOBS
EVER SO FRESH
DAISY
MARC JACOBS
EVER SO FRESH

editor's letter

OUR PLEASURE
SPRING ARRIVES IN ETHEREAL STYLE IN 'THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE' (PAGE 122)

PHOTOGRAPHS: EKUA KING, EDD HORDER. DRESS AND JACKET, BOTH PRICE ON REQUEST, MOLLY GODDARD. EARRINGS, £375, JOANNE BURKE

We're thinking about the future of love and sex in all its complicated, life-affirming, messy and wonderful forms this month. In the past year, it feels like half the ELLE team have got engaged, married, or had babies. Meanwhile, I have friends who are happily single and doubling down on their commitment to themselves. All of this is happening against a backdrop of deep societal discontent. As I write, half a million workers spanning teachers, fire fighters, civil servants, border staff and more are on strike. And a recent YouGov poll revealed that more than 60% of Britons are feeling sad or stressed.

This makes me think of bell hooks' observation from her seminal book *All About Love*: 'Everywhere we learn that love is important, and yet we are bombarded by its failure… This bleak picture in no way alters the nature of our longing. We still hope that love will prevail. We still believe in love's promise.'

And so we've packed this issue with reasons to do precisely that. There's our cover star, Hunter Schafer, who speaks openly and candidly with contributing editor Lynette Nylander about how the many kinds of love she shares with her *Euphoria* castmates, from her best friend Zendaya to her partner Dominic Fike, keep her grounded (page 98). Meanwhile, writer Natalia Pasichnyk shares a moving account of her first year of long-distance from her husband, after being separated by the war in Ukraine, and how they've managed to hold on to intimacy and connection (page 146). Here in the UK, a desire for the latter is driving zillennials' shift away from hook-up culture and towards relationships that feel more purposeful, as deputy digital editor Katie O'Malley discovers in her piece 'Less is more', which debunks the myth of the great 'sex recession' (page 136).

Like the sex-drought debate, much has been made of the post-lockdown wedding boom, which has unfolded since the world reopened. It's a moment that has given rise to the cult fashion wedding as social-media phenomenon (think Simon Porte Jacquemus' viral nuptials in Provence or Chloë Sevigny's epic extravaganza). On page 140, we speak to some of the most stylish brides we know, including Nabihah Iqbal, who reconnected with her Pakistani heritage as she created the outfits for her wedding to designer Nicholas Daley; and Daisy Hoppen, whose buzzy, two-day party featured some of the best of British fashion.

And for those who are simply in a romantic mood, we give you fresh ideas to dress your way through spring ('A soft life', on page 110) – looks to lift you as the days grow a little longer and brighter.

Kenya

KENYA HUNT Editor-in-Chief

VERSACE pour femme DYLAN PURPLE

Dune
Dune
LONDON

Dune
LONDON

dunelondon.com @dune_london #startwiththeshoes

contributors

PAGE 110

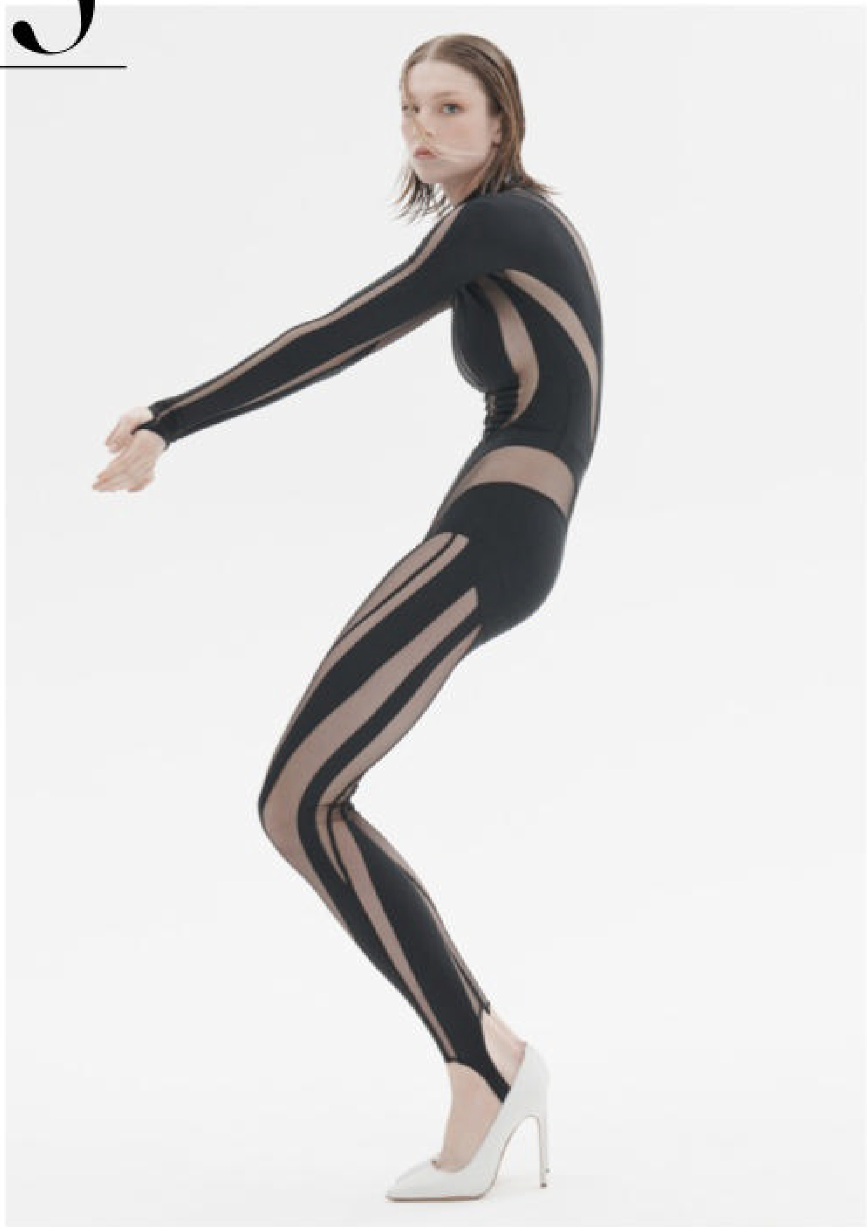
ANNE-MARIE CURTIS

Founder of sustainable glossy *The Calendar Magazine* and former ELLE editor-in-chief has worked in the fashion industry for more than three decades. She has recently moved out of London to live by the sea, and her hope for the future of fashion is that it will slow down and become more responsible: 'It's clear that the constant pursuit of growth and endless consumption is just not tenable.' She styled the fashion story 'A soft life' on page 110.

PAGE 50

CAMILLE CHARRIÈRE

Born in Paris and based in London, Charrière has an effortless style that is a blend of both cultures – and is the reason why she's become one of the most influential fashion voices of her generation, and an ELLE contributing editor. The most joyful item in her wardrobe right now is 'a white shaggy shearling jacket by one of my favourite brands, Magda Butrym. It's so special I'm convinced it makes me act different'. She writes about embracing naked dressing on page 50.



PAGE 146

SABRINA IMBLER

The science and conservation writer explores queerness and nature through their work. Their latest book *My Life in Sea Creatures* dives into the intersections of identity and the ocean. For Sabrina, who writes about their first queer infatuation on page 146, one of the most important career lessons has been to recognise privilege: 'I feel grateful for my own path, and remind myself of the ways I can help other writers find their footing and their voice.' Their writing has appeared in *The New York Times* and *The Atlantic*, among other publications.

PAGE 98

PAOLA KUDACKI

Her career has spanned ballet, styling and art direction, but the New York-based Argentinian photographer is best known for her intimate and highly emotive work, which has seen her shoot everyone from Beyoncé to Naomi Campbell, and covers for *Time* magazine. On page 98, she captures our cover star Hunter Schafer in New York: 'Hunter is so beautiful, so kind and so fun. I love her energy and her willingness to challenge herself. We shot on a cold rainy day outside… she was totally up for creating great images even though the weather was extreme.'

WORDS BY EVE WALKER. PHOTOGRAPHS: PAOLA KUDACKI, LIZ COLLINS, MARION AGUAS, MATTHEW EADES

GIOVANNI RASPINI
5, South Molton Street - London
LONDON MILAN ROME FLORENCE VENICE MONTE CARLO

“Uplifting somebody also uplifts you”

JOURDAN DUNN
Mother, model, actor and ambassador.

Clarks®

FOR THE WORLD AHEAD.

DISCOVER JOURDAN'S STORY
clarks.co.uk

Sheer brilliance

The naked dress, once the attention-grabbing stuff of red carpets, has taken over catwalks and trickled down to the everyday. Camille Charrière reveals how she became a poster woman for the look

IT IS A TRUTH UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A MODERN woman in search of a good night out must be in want of a transparent dress. I should know: I tied the knot in one. In fact, I've been wearing iterations of barely there partywear so much this past year that I've inadvertently become a face of the phenomenon. Right on cue, a notification pops up on my phone. 'Why always naked?' one of my Instagram followers asks pointedly under a recent post of mine. Touché. In the picture, I'm standing in the orchestra stalls at the Royal Opera House in a see-through Saint Laurent dress, flanked by a crowd of chic theatre-goers, all of whom are dressed up to the nines. But I haven't always been this… nude.

Once upon a time, stepping out of your front door with your derrière and nipples on show would have been unthinkable, even for the most fashion-forward. But lately, whether you look to the catwalk or your favourite celebrities, near-nudity has become ubiquitous. From Florence Pugh going braless in a cloud of Valentino pink at the brand's couture show in Rome to Rihanna's transgressive approach to maternity wear (such as the time she dressed her bump in nothing but sheer layers of black lingerie) and Emily Ratajkowski's viral closing look at Nensi Dojaka SS23 (the designer has spearheaded the fashion-flasher trend), showing a lot of skin is officially in.

There have been variations of the so-called 'naked look' since the 1930s (torso-hugging and flesh-coloured rather than see-through at that point), but it was Jean Louis, dressmaker to the stars, who really sent Hollywood into a frenzy with his illusion designs in the 1950s. You'll know his most iconic creation: the body-skimming gown Marilyn Monroe was famously sewn into to sing 'Happy Birthday' to John F Kennedy, sparking rumours of an affair between herself and the President – the very same dress Kim Kardashian controversially wore to last year's Met Gala.

In the 1960s, Jane Birkin reinvented the look, giving it gamine appeal with shorter, risqué hemlines. And then, of course, came *that* metallic dress worn by Kate Moss to the Elite Model Agency Look of the Year party in 1993, which the supermodel apparently didn't even realise was transparent until the newspapers the next day, when the effect of the camera flashes upon the fabric became clear. Today's version involves wearing sheer fabric of various deniers depending on your

NAKED ATTRACTION
FROM LEFT: EMILY RATAJKOWSKI CLOSING NENSI DOJAKA SS23; RIHANNA'S PREGNANCY STYLE; CAMILLE CHARRIÈRE ON HER WEDDING DAY; PRECIOUS LEE WEARING ALTUZARRA AT THE 2022 MET GALA; KATE MOSS WITH NAOMI CAMPBELL IN 1993; FLORENCE PUGH IN VALENTINO; A 90s JOHN GALLIANO LOOK

bravado – typically a dress, cut close to the body, and that may or may not come with built-in underwear.

Anyone who follows me online will know that my personal dedication to the trend runs deep. I first fell in love with the idea of naked dressing during my days running the blog Fashion Salad, having seen Kate Moss in that aforementioned silvery slip. My infatuation started with a vintage find I picked up on Portobello Road for £10. I was trying to copy my ultimate muse, but the itsy-bitsy, spaghetti-strap number ended up lying at the bottom of my wardrobe for years. Back then, as a relatively conservative French lawyer-turned-London girl about town, I lacked the confidence to go near-nude. Moss' gossamer-fine dress seemed to have no place in my life. It's not that I wasn't going out – I'm never too far from a dancefloor. Rather, I simply didn't have the flair to style it, nor, more importantly, the audacity to challenge the judgemental types. As you will learn if you give it a whirl, strangers have a lot to say.

Later, I moved on to Galliano's bias-cut gowns; fell in love with sustainable naked-dress label Kitten by Kate, which makes flirtatious pieces from deadstock silk-chiffon; shot a cover story in sparkly mesh (and proudly sent the magazine to my grandfather); and had a Nensi Dojaka crescendo in *Atonement*-green at the British Fashion Awards, followed by the grand dénouement of having an actual thong on display in my Harris Reed wedding dress.

Unsurprisingly, my commitment to naked nuptial dressing caused uproar among the twitterati. The online vitriol sent my way was alarming, with comments ranging from 'hideous and tacky' and 'she looks more like a hooker than a writer', to 'porn has entered mainstream culture'. Moreover, it sparked controversy among my relatives; my brother still hasn't recovered.

None of this has deterred me. In fact, I've lost count of the number of body-revealing ensembles I've slipped into after dark. At this point, it's a way of life. But, contrary to what people might think, my obsession with the sheer stuff doesn't have anything to do with looking (or feeling) hot.

So, what changed? Post-lockdown and out of my insecure twenties, I began to own the reality that, for me, this look is about the female gaze. Radical self-acceptance – or, rather, the desire to celebrate your body – is required.

That realisation happened when I was on holiday in Greece three years ago. I was attending a wedding with friends and it was a boiling-hot day; the scantily dressed seemed sensible. There I was, with my body very much visible, dancing on the cobblestones without squirming in embarrassment, despite having felt too shy to go topless with the others on the beach a few hours before. It felt freeing. I no longer cared what naysayers thought – that my boobs were not perky or full enough, or the wrong shape – nor whether it would impact my brand relationships (not to mention displease family members). This was me. There was no hiding, no facetune-ing, no filtering, no form-enhancing chicken fillets. The naked truth, like it or lump it.

It would be deceitful not to acknowledge that, despite my own body-image struggles, I have the privilege of existing as a slim, able-bodied white woman. Sizeism runs rampant in the fashion industry; I'm all too aware that the naked dress can be received differently depending on the wearer.

But for me, peeling away the fabric has felt like a celebration of the lessons I'm learning with age. It's the freedom to wear what makes me happy within my body. As Maria Grazia Chiuri said when she created a nude-colour dress for Chiara Ferragni: 'This illusion of nudity aims to remind women of the right that they have to show and handle themselves without feeling judged or guilty.' There's a perception that, by wearing a naked dress, you're looking to get attention from men. In my case, it's the opposite: I think we do it for other women, and as a way of navigating our own bodies and insecurities. Some say it's 'brave', but they wouldn't have the confidence to do it themselves. That was once me, but I didn't know what I was missing out on.

Camille Charrière is an ELLE contributing editor. ☐

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF CAMILLE CHARRIÈRE, GETTY IMAGES, SHUTTERSTOCK

MARCCAIN
MARC-CAIN.COM

agenda

WORDS BY EVE WALKER
AND NATALIE ZANNIKOS

JORJA SMITH WALKS FOR MARINE SERRE. BELOW, FROM LEFT: JACQUEMUS; KNWLS; NENSI DOJAKA

wear: Kind of blue

As the collections landing in stores this month prove, you can never have too much denim. See Knwls' slinky slips, Nensi Dojaka's two-tone jeans or Marine Serre's repurposed Y2K belt dresses (memorably worn by Jorja Smith on the catwalk). The Canadian tuxedo just got dressed up.

go see: FEELING HER WAY

The award-winning Venice Biennale exhibition by Sonia Boyce can now be seen at Margate's Turner Contemporary gallery (until 8 May). The emotive installation, which combines video, collage, music and sculpture, celebrates Black womanhood and creativity. You'll leave feeling uplifted and inspired.

try: Ice-cream sandwiches

Our favourite central-London gelato joint Gelupo is teaming up with renowned bakery and restaurant Jolene to put an Easter spin on a Sicilian breakfast staple: say hello to the hot-cross-bun ice-cream sandwich. There are 22 different flavours of gelato to choose from; try as many as you like at Gelupo between 27 March and 10 April.

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, IMAXTREE, CRISTIANO CORTE/BRITISH COUNCIL, STEVE JOYCE

go see:

Woolf Works

Don't miss Wayne McGregor's award-winning dance triptych inspired by the work of Virginia Woolf at the Royal Opera House this month (until 23 March). You'll be moved by routines that embody the essence of Woolf's essays, letters, diaries and novels, alongside an original score by superstar composer Max Richter.

shop:

Dancing in the street

The balletcore trend is far from over. For SS23, MM6 has created several iterations of head-turning pointe shoes for fans of flats to step into, available in fuchsia pink, dusty rose and inky black. Prepare to see It girls such as Bella Hadid and Paloma Elsesser wear these beauties with leg warmers, miniskirts and cargo trousers this spring.

watch:

RYE LANE

This directorial debut from Raine Allen-Miller, starring David Jonsson and Vivian Oparah, follows two newly single twentysomethings during one hectic day in south London. By helping each other through bad break-ups, they learn why you should never give up on love. A modern rom-com that will have you both laughing and weeping, *Rye Lane* is in cinemas from 17 March.

PHOTOGRAPHS: TRISTRAM KENTON, COURTESY OF SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES, IMAXTREE

ALVA CLAIRE for MARINA RINALDI

MARINA RINALDI

INCOMING
STYLE
FOREVER
Levi's®
FAVOURITES
LEVI.COM

www.herno.com . ph. +39.0322.77091
© Cantiere Maggiore
E 8° 33' 28.008
Laminar
N 45° 49' 18.6048
HERNO COUTURE ENGINEERING

FIRST LOOK

CHANEL
CHRISTOPHER KANE
CHRISTOPHER KANE
LOEWE
ALAÏA
VICTORIA BECKHAM
FENDI
FENDI
FERRAGAMO
ACNE STUDIOS
MAX MARA
BURBERRY
LAQUAN SMITH
16ARLINGTON
SPORTMAX
NENSI DOJAKA
PRADA
CHANEL
CHRISTOPHER KANE
VICTORIA BECKHAM
BURBERRY
ACNE STUDIOS

POWER PASTELS

SUGARY SHADES ARE TOUGHENING UP FOR SPRING. SEE ACNE STUDIOS, WHICH SHOWED THE ALLURE OF A SUBDUED PALETTE COUPLED WITH BOLD ACCESSORIES. ALAÏA MADE A CASE FOR DRAMATIC, BUTTERY YELLOW HOODED JUMPSUITS, WHILE CHET LO'S SIGNATURE SPIKY BAGS WERE RENDERED IN BLUSH AND LILAC. APPROACH THE SORBET TREND WITH CUT-OUTS AND CONFIDENCE

WORDS BY ENI SUBAIR. PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE

HER TIME IS NOW
PLAYWRIGHT, POET, MOVIE STAR – DOMINQUE FISHBACK IS MAKING HER VOICE HEARD

In conversation: Dominique Fishback

Donald Glover selected her for his new show, and this summer she leads the latest 'Transformers' film. ELLE meets an actor taking control of her destiny

WORDS BY LENA DE CASPARIS PHOTOGRAPH BY ERICA GÊNÉCÉ

DOMINIQUE FISHBACK BELIEVES IN THE power of manifestation, which she has practised in varying shapes and forms since childhood. 'I've journalled a lot over the years,' she says, 'which is cool, because now I get to see it all come true.' She cites an entry in which she visualised a lunch date with a particular A-lister (only for that precise scenario to transpire 18 years later, to the very day) as proof that it works. But she could just as easily point to her entire career. 'I'm from East New York. I didn't have family that was in the performing arts. But when I would watch films, I would write in a journal, "If I was that character, I would do it like this…"'

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY, GETTY IMAGES

ON THE UP AND UP
FROM ABOVE LEFT: FISHWICK WITH DANIEL KALUUYA IN *JUDAS AND THE BLACK MESSIAH*; WITH *THE LAST DAYS OF PTOLEMY GREY* CO-STAR SAMUEL L JACKSON; AT 2022'S *VANITY FAIR* OSCARS PARTY

It's enough to persuade anyone to buy a notebook; Fishback, now 31, is speedily taking over our screens. Having signed up to free drama classes at 15, she graduated from New York's Pace University with a theatre degree in 2013, before launching her self-penned play *Subverted*, in which she played over 20 characters (Jamie Foxx is helping her bring the work back to Broadway later this year). Parts in *The Hate U Give* and HBO series *The Deuce* followed and, in 2021, Fishback earned a Bafta nomination for her supporting role in *Judas and the Black Messiah* opposite Daniel Kaluuya. Since then, there's been the critically acclaimed *The Last Days of Ptolemy Grey* on Apple TV+, in which she stars alongside Samuel L Jackson. But this year will be her biggest yet. *Swarm*, the highly anticipated new show from Donald Glover (he hand-picked her for the role) is out this month. And later this summer, she'll take the lead in the $200 million blockbuster *Transformers: Rise of the Beasts*.

Today, however, Fishback has a new task in her lap. A lively six-month-old puppy called Satori joins her on Zoom from her home in Los Angeles. 'She doesn't like being in her crate,' she smiles, looking a little exasperated. 'Her name is a Zen Buddhist word, which means a "sudden state of spiritual enlightenment". But then the first week I got her, I was crying to my mom that she's not [obedient]. My little sister said, "A sudden state of spiritual enlightenment maybe doesn't mean right away,"' she laughs.

Still, Fishback likes a challenge – in work as well as in pets. 'Sometimes, you've got to just do things that are a little outside the box. Otherwise, what's the point?' It's this attitude that led her to work with Glover on the thriller series exploring the celebrity culture around a Beyoncé-like figure (Fishback plays her obsessed fan). 'I've never done anything remotely like this in my life. That's what makes it really exciting for me,' she says.

Working with Glover was also a pull. 'I think one of the most exciting things was his sense of humour, which allowed me to be weird. I'm very silly with my family, but I don't really get to show that on screen. And so being in his orbit, I got a thrill out of kind of making Donald be like, "Huh, that's weird."'

She knows that *Transformers* will push her fame to a new level. 'I always wanted to do something like [it] but I've never seen myself represented in movies like that. So when it first came up I didn't even want to audition. I didn't know if the chance was real for me.' It was. And she was cast alongside fellow Brooklynite and friend Anthony Ramos (*In the Heights*) to lead the project. To prepare for her newfound recognisability, she spent last summer taking the subway around her old neighbourhoods in New York, getting lost in the squeeze and enjoying the anonymity while she still could. 'It's going be the moment in my life where I realise, "Oh, things have changed."'

Up next, she wants to try a rom-com. 'I'm a big romantic. I love *When Harry Met Sally* and *Say Anything* and those type of things. I want to do something like *The Notebook* or *Titanic* that's all about the love,' she says. 'Then I need to manifest some love. My own romantic love.' With her proven powers, there's no doubt Fishback will make it all happen. ☐

'Swarm' debuts on Amazon Prime this month. 'Transformers: Rise of the Beasts' is out this summer.

JEWELLERY

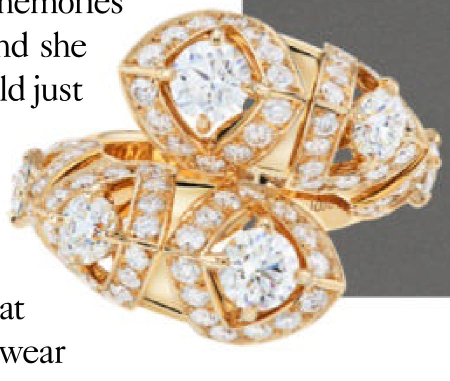
Ring the changes

When it comes to the way we wear jewellery, Louis Vuitton's Francesca Amfitheatrof says women are rewriting the rules

WORDS BY KENYA HUNT

FRANCESCA AMFITHEATROF IS A LITERAL AND FIGURATIVE rock star in the world of fashion. Her gift for turning gemstones and precious metals into works of art has earned her a series of sparkling creative roles that has led to her current position as the artistic director of Louis Vuitton Watches and Jewellery. Her fan club spans far and wide, encompassing influential editors, retailers and celebrities including Ana de Armas and Alicia Vikander, and her cool factor remains as high as ever, untarnished by navigating years and years of vibe shifts. Most notably, she's changing the way women buy and wear jewellery at a time when the idea of self-gifting expensive pieces has become as buzzy a post-pandemic topic as self-care.

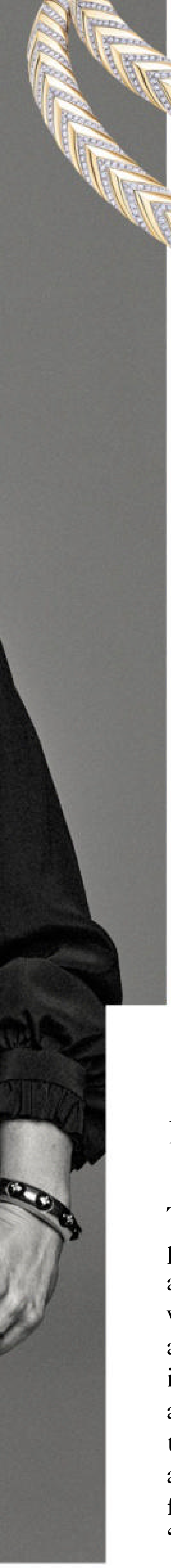
But before all this, Amfitheatrof was a small girl lying on her grandmother's lap, staring at a dragonfly suspended in an amber pendant while her grandfather played the piano. 'She'd stroke my forehead, which is one of my first memories of tenderness that I have as a kid,' she recalls. 'And she had a gold chain with a big piece of amber that would just float above my head. I would look at this insect inside the amber and think, "Wow, there is a whole world in there."'



For Amfitheatrof, jewellery was a sensory and emotional experience from the beginning – one that she says is about sound and touch. 'Italians like to wear a lot of jewellery and a lot of gold,' she says. (Her mother is Italian, while her father, a former bureau chief for *Time* magazine, is American.) 'So it's culturally embedded in [me] to have this interest in jewellery and how intimate it is to your personality. Jewellery doesn't really follow fashion. It's something that follows the person,' she says.

We're sitting and drinking cold-pressed green juice outside a showroom that contains her glittering new collection, Spirit Chapter II, within the sprawling mothership of Maison Louis Vuitton at Place Vendôme in Paris. 'I always say that jewellery has to be sensual, and people don't quite understand what I'm talking about. But it's true: it has to meet with the body,' she says, in a surprisingly British accent. (Amfitheatrof has lived in England, Japan, Russia, Italy and the United States, where she's currently based. 'Because I grew up all over the world, I never knew where I wanted to live,' she says.)

After swerving her father's Harvard aspirations for her, she attended Central Saint Martins and the Royal College of Art in London. In the course of her studies Amfitheatrof became a part of a now-legendary friendship group that included Alexander McQueen and Damien Hirst; Jay Jopling of White Cube put on her first gallery show. 'At the time it was very anti-establishment. You know, Margaret Thatcher was still going strong. One era was ending in Britain and another one beginning,' she says. Big jobs followed, including a stint as the first female artistic director of Tiffany & Co.



All jewellery, price on request, **LOUIS VUITTON**

SHINING EXAMPLES
LEFT: FRANCESCA AMFITHEATROF. ABOVE, FROM LEFT: THE ACTORS ALICIA VIKANDER, ANA DE ARMAS AND JUNG HO-YEON, WHO HAVE ALL BEEN SPOTTED IN AMFITHEATROF'S DESIGNS FOR LOUIS VUITTON

Now, she's designing through yet another period of transition. There's been much discussion in recent years about how the power dynamics around jewellery are shifting. Generations ago, a sapphire necklace might have been a trophy a husband would buy to admire on his wife, whom he might have viewed as a trophy of a different kind. These days, women are increasingly purchasing pieces for themselves, just as they would a handbag or shoes. The idea of waiting for a romantic partner to buy a ring feels outdated. 'There are a lot of women now who are very successful, who know what they want and choose for themselves. They don't have to wait to be given, you know, "the set",' says Amfitheatrof.

Walking me through her collection, she describes how she likes to mix gold and white metals to create a sense of warmth. She wears her own jewellery with a casual ease. 'These are different wedding bands,' she explains, showing me a series of delicate stacked rings on her fingers. 'That one was my grandmother's.' On her ears, small star-shaped diamonds match the low-key vibe of her relaxed black jumpsuit. Amfitheatrof says her lived experience as a woman has resulted in a different approach to design: 'I do believe we've been living in an archival decade, and it's sort of boring. But I think [in this collection] we have this fabulous approach that is very in tune with the way women are thinking today,' she says. 'I feel like women are looking for more meaning in what they wear. These pieces are going to last a lot longer than any of us. So they have to have a certain power in the space in which they exist.' ◻

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF ALIQUE AND LOUIS VUITTON, GETTY IMAGES

Jacket, £765, **DRIES VAN NOTEN**

MIDAS TOUCH

PAIR YOUR PRECIOUS GEMS WITH TRUSTY BASICS TO MAKE THEM POP

Bag, £600, **JACQUEMUS** at **SELFRIDGES**

Jeans, £100, **LEVI'S**

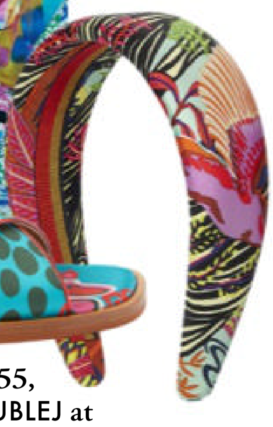
Trainers, £110, **NIKE** at **SELFRIDGES**

TARTAN

The V&A Dundee, opening 1 April
Kilts at the ready to check out this joyful exploration of the iconic Scottish fabric, which symbolises unity and revolution.

£625, VIVIENNE WESTWOOD

£710, MARINE SERRE at SELFRIDGES



£420, HERMÈS

£355, LA DOUBLEJ at MATCHESFASHION

THE OFFBEAT SARI

The Design Museum, 19 May – 17 September
This beautiful celebration of the traditional garment, featuring 90 contemporary Indian pieces, is one not to miss.

ART

IN YOUR EXHIBITIONIST ERA

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR SHOWS OF THE SEASON? AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHAT WILL WE BE WEARING TO THEM?

£1,095, STELLA McCARTNEY

£175, ANYA HINDMARCH

DEAR EARTH: ART AND HOPE IN A TIME OF CRISIS

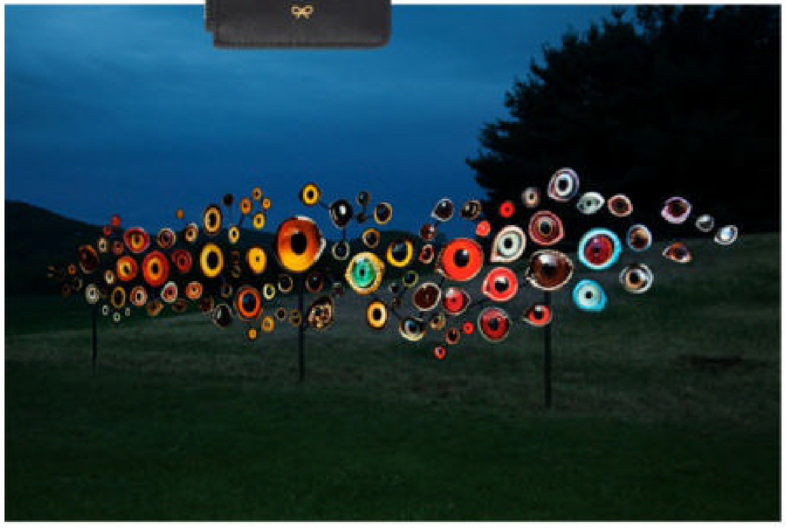
Hayward Gallery, 21 June – 3 September
Artists including Agnes Denes, Otobong Nkanga, Hito Steyerl and Imani Jacqueline Brown join forces to see how art can respond to the climate crisis.

£975, AMINA MUADDI

£795, MULBERRY X AHLUWALIA

A WORLD IN COMMON: CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Tate Modern, 6 July – 14 January 2024
This multi-generational survey of modern African photography casts a new light on the continent's culture and history, examining spirituality, identity and urbanism.

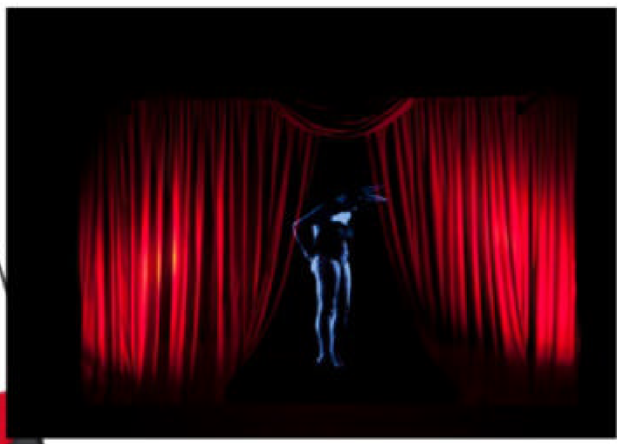


CARRIE MAE WEEMS

Barbican, 21 June – 3 September
In her first solo exhibition in the UK, the American artist explores race, womanhood and power.

£475, MOSCHINO

£1,395, FERRAGAMO



PHOTOGRAPHS: LOUIE BANKS, BIKRAMJIT BOSE, JENNY KENDLER, CARRIE MAE WEEMS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST, JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY NEW YORK/GALERIE BARBARA THUMM BERLIN, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND GOODMAN GALLERY

FULL CIRCLE
FROM LEFT: ALVA CLAIRE, WHO DESIGNED A CAPSULE FOR OPÉRASPORT; LOOKS FROM THE SS23 COLLECTION; AWA MALINA STELTER AND STEPHANIE GUNDELACH

FASHION

Introducing: OpéraSport

With roots in both Copenhagen and Paris, this seasonless brand is setting the industry alight

WORDS BY ENI SUBAIR

PHOTOGRAPHS: ANA KRAS, LOUISE TORNFELDT, JAMES COCHRANE

AWA MALINA STELTER AND STEPHANIE GUNDELACH, THE co-founders of OpéraSport, describe their business as a natural extension of their friendship. The pair had been close for two years before their partners encouraged them to collaborate. 'Awa and I were having lunch and talking about our dreams,' says Gundelach. 'We quickly realised we shared the same ones.'

In 2019, just three months after that initial conversation, OpéraSport was born, and its refined DNA and sustainable edge have since fulfilled the needs of minimalists seeking a timeless wardrobe packed with ample personality. High-profile admirers range from Kourtney Kardashian and the model Jordan Daniels to fashion-world stalwarts including Pernille Teisbaek.

Their previous experiences in the industry have helped boost the profile of the brand: Gundelach was a Paris-based stylist and consultant, and Stelter has spent decades working for retailers in Copenhagen. Speaking to both founders' backgrounds, the 'Opéra' in the name nods to the chic Parisian neighbourhood, while the second half references the sporty edge of the Danish capital. Going against the grain by releasing collections via editions and remaining conscious of excess waste is a vital part of the business model. 'We're constantly looking to find new fabrics and sustainable options. Our stock is minimal, so we never overproduce,' says Gundelach.

A focus on motherhood is also at the heart of the brand. 'We were sitting by the pool together while on holiday in Majorca last year and thinking about what was missing from our wardrobes as mothers,' says Stelter. 'We both have young children, and we wanted to create garments you could wear to chase your kids around in,' Gundelach adds.

Hard work by the pair (they only hired their first additional member of staff last February, and are now a team of nine) culminated in the brand's debut show at Copenhagen Fashion Week in August 2021. Their AW23 presentation at Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art saw them unite with the Bath-born, Berlin-based artist Tom Anholt. 'The colours we used for this season were based around his paintings, and we included pieces made from past collections,' Gundelach explains. Growing a creative community is important to the pair, who cite the stylist Veneda Carter and model Alva Claire as part of their trusted network of collaborators.

Appropriately for a label based on a foundation of female friendship, providing clothes that will make women feel good remains the mission. 'Building up this brand has made us very close,' says Stelter. 'We're always striving to find the right balance between parenthood and work, plus we both value good energy and positive thinking. Strong women everywhere are our inspiration; we want our customers to feel sexy and confident.' ☐

Basic instinct

Normcore, the hipster anti-style, has staged a comeback for spring. But, this time, it's all grown up

WORDS BY KRISTEN BATEMAN

EASY RIDERS
FROM POLISHED NEUTRALS AND FLANNEL TO CLASSIC WHITE SHIRTS AT VALENTINO (LEFT), THE STYLE SET HAS EMBRACED THE QUIET POWER OF SIMPLICITY

WHEN KATE MOSS MADE A SURPRISE APPEARANCE ON BOTTEGA Veneta's SS23 catwalk, perhaps the biggest shock was what she was wearing. The icon who launched a thousand Pinterest boards had traded her glam It-girl ensembles for simple, oversize jeans and a Kurt Cobain-worthy flannel-print shirt. The moment turned out to be a trend indicator of sorts, as the season hummed with white undershirts, reimagined denim (rendered in leather at Bottega Veneta or comically blown-up at Vaquera) and quirky dad caps on street-style stars. Welcome to the new era of normcore – and all the 2010s nostalgia that comes with it.

We've been living in a period of maximalist fashion during the pandemic, and now that more-is-more approach is starting to rub off on even the humblest of garments for spring. Just look at Miu Miu's layered T-shirts or Peter Do's, Alaïa's or Valentino's scaled-up, reimagined button-downs: the most classic wardrobe staples are coming back into style with a subversive vengeance.

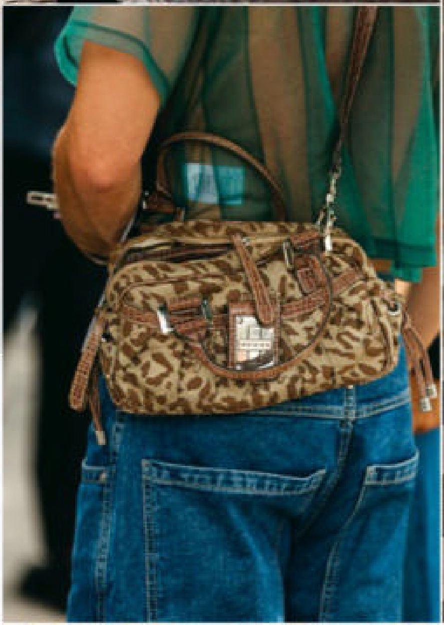
It all goes back to the early 2010s, when normcore was born. Part of the reason for its sudden return now is that, 'we're in a neo-yuppie moment', says Sean Monahan, founder of trend-forecasting group 8Ball and co-founder of the now-defunct collective and trend-forecasting group K-Hole, which brought the term 'normcore' to the masses in 2013. The new, more upscale normcore wave isn't exactly what it was 10 years ago. The blandness has transmuted into something slightly more complex, and underlying it is also a hint of preppiness: think less Jerry Seinfeld and more Carolyn Bessette Kennedy or Princess Diana. Both women were idolised for their minimalist aesthetic, and their old-money style is finding a new audience with those who've burned out on dopamine dressing.

'It has to do with a wider shift from maximalism to minimalism,' says Monahan. 'Once you leave the confines of certain neighbourhoods, it's hard to tell if people are going to the office or the gym or to meet their friends. It's just a total collapse into casualness.'

What might look ho-hum is actually quite subversive – and driven by irony. Take, for instance, what Monahan calls the, 'persistence of the meme baseball hat'. But he also cites Instagram-famous brands Praying and Hollywood Gifts as examples of this kind of tongue-in-cheek dressing. Likewise, the original normcore, 'was mostly about this acceptance of the emergence of social media', Monahan notes, 'and the inability to do the hipster thing and find un-Googleable or unidentifiable treasures in thrift stores or from small labels'.

Normcore's second coming finds us in the same boat, but this time we're even more chronically online and glued to TikTok's ever-changing array of crazes: balletcore, the tennis obsession, the 'old money' look, the 'clean girl' aesthetic… In an endless cycle of trends, being basic has never felt so good. □

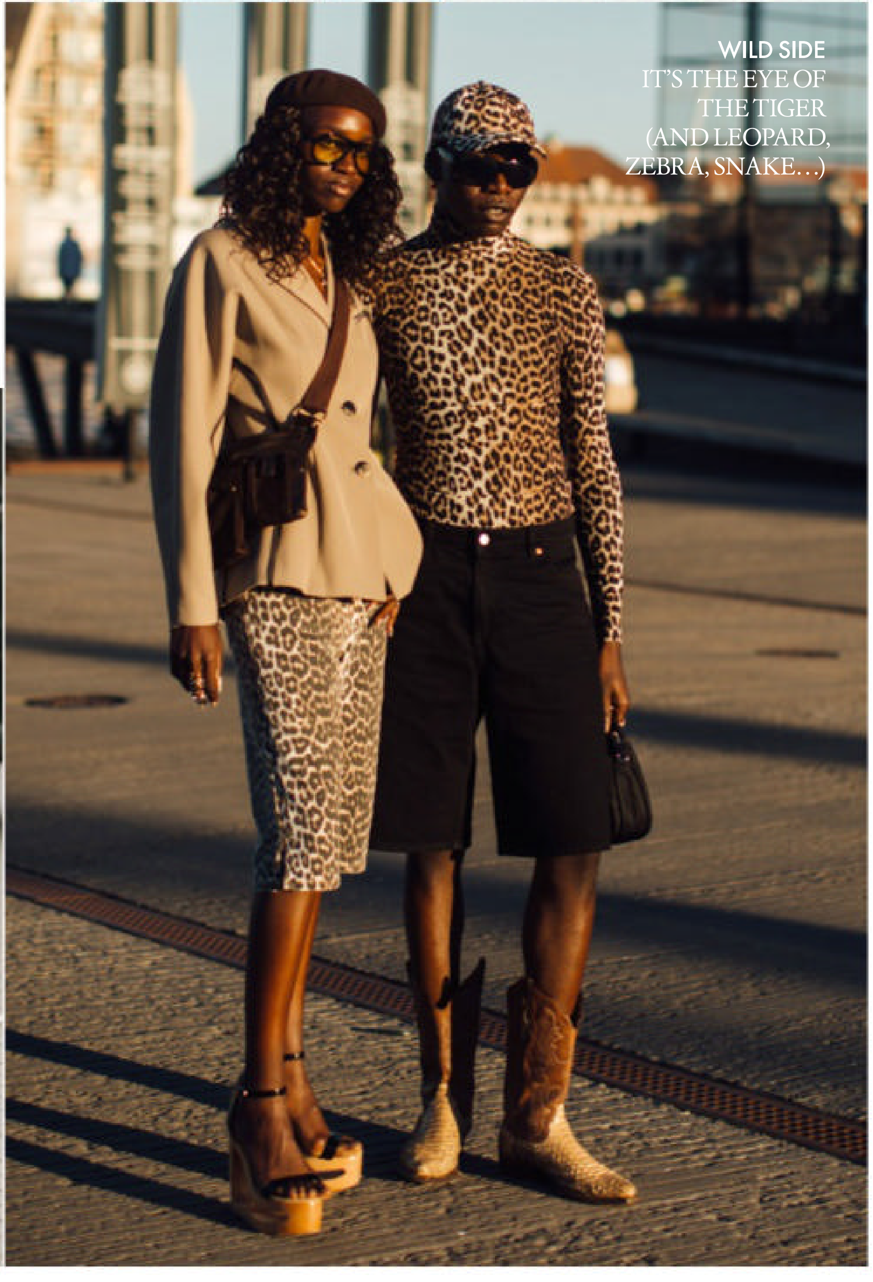
PHOTOGRAPHS: CRIS FRAGKOU, COURTESY OF BOTTEGA VENETA, BURBERRY, MIU MIU AND BALLY



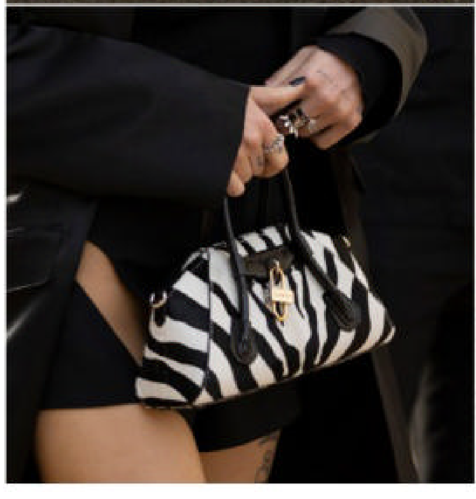
STREET STYLE

ANIMAL MAGNETISM

Minimalists look away. This season, the streets are loud, proud and on the prowl as leopard, cheetah and zebra prints take over the pavements – but this time, they've arrived in a new, grown-up iteration, worn with tonal neutrals, soft suiting and double denim to keep it more runway than roar.



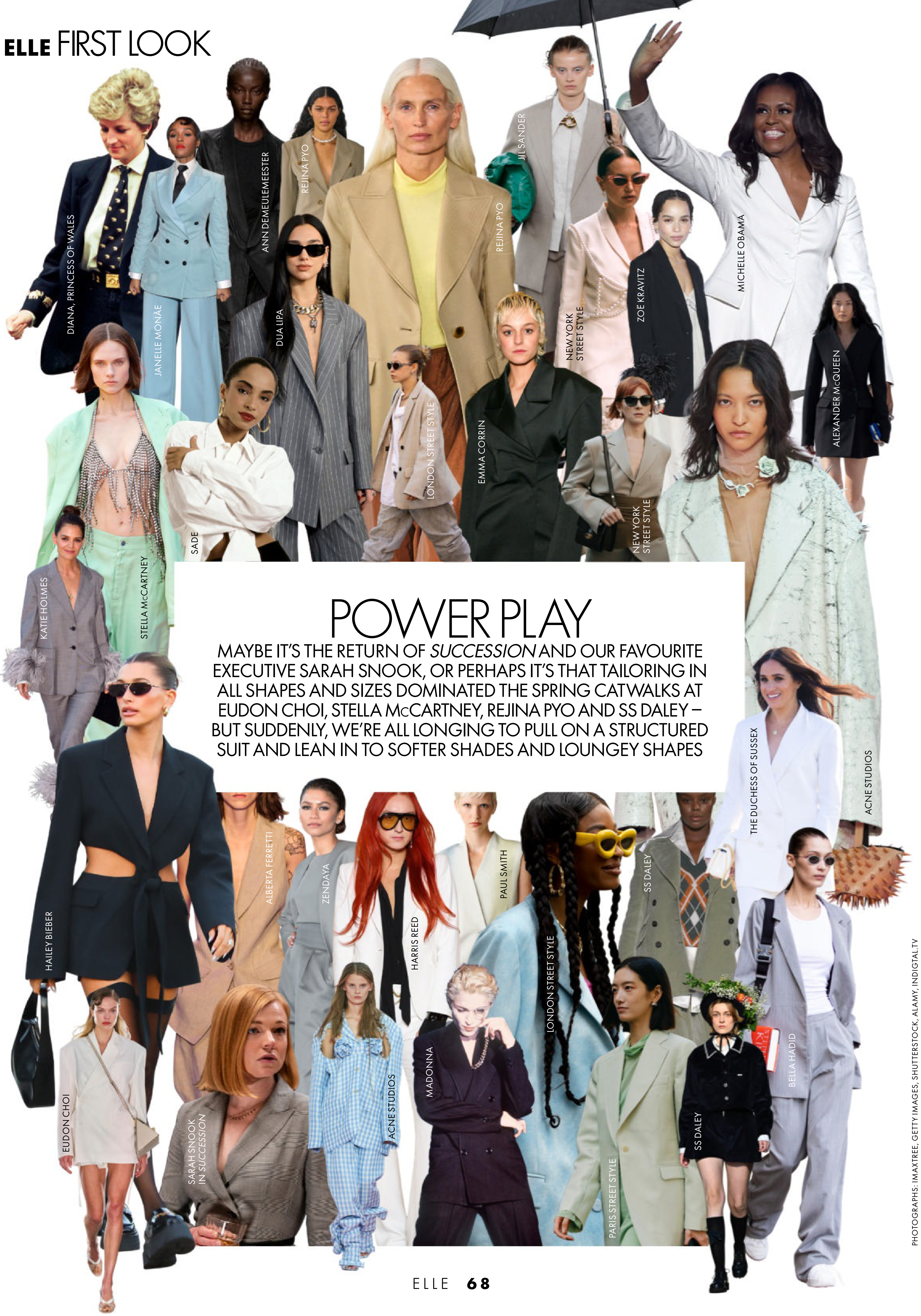
WILD SIDE IT'S THE EYE OF THE TIGER (AND LEOPARD, ZEBRA, SNAKE...)



PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE

POWER PLAY

MAYBE IT'S THE RETURN OF *SUCCESSION* AND OUR FAVOURITE EXECUTIVE SARAH SNOOK, OR PERHAPS IT'S THAT TAILORING IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES DOMINATED THE SPRING CATWALKS AT EUDON CHOI, STELLA McCARTNEY, REJINA PYO AND SS DALEY – BUT SUDDENLY, WE'RE ALL LONGING TO PULL ON A STRUCTURED SUIT AND LEAN IN TO SOFTER SHADES AND LOUNGEY SHAPES


DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES
JANELLE MONÁE
ANN DEMEULEMEESTER
REJINA PYO
DUA LIPA
REJINA PYO
JIL SANDER
NEW YORK STREET STYLE
ZOË KRAVITZ
MICHELLE OBAMA
ALEXANDER McQUEEN
STELLA McCARTNEY
SADE
LONDON STREET STYLE
EMMA CORRIN
NEW YORK STREET STYLE
KATIE HOLMES
THE DUCHESS OF SUSSEX
ACNE STUDIOS
HAILEY BIEBER
ALBERTA FERRETTI
ZENDAYA
HARRIS REED
PAUL SMITH
LONDON STREET STYLE
SS DALEY
BELLA HADID
EUDON CHOI
SARAH SNOOK IN *SUCCESSION*
ACNE STUDIOS
MADONNA
PARIS STREET STYLE
SS DALEY

PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE, GETTY IMAGES, SHUTTERSTOCK, ALAMY, INDIGITAL.TV

LONGCHAMP —— très paris

THE BOX-TROT BAG
LONGCHAMP.COM

Love your
B bs
It starts with a bra fit

M&S
Book your bra fit in store or online

CLARINS
WITH
HYALURONIC ACID
POWER COMPLEX
CLARINS
PARIS
Hydra-Essentiel [HA²]
Crème désaltérante
Moisturizes and quenches, silky cream
Peaux normales à sèches - Normal to dry skin
CLARINS
PARIS
Hydra-Essentiel [HA²]
Soin de nuit repulpant "anti-soif"
Plumps, moisturizes and quenches, night care
Toutes peaux - All skin types
CLARINS.COM

NEW Hydra-Essentiel [HA²]

60 SECONDS TO PLUMPER SKIN*

Our duo of hyaluronic acids instantly plumps and hydrates skin, Clarins exclusive organic leaf of life extract boosts your skin's natural hyaluronic acid levels.

Hydrate. Plump. Glow.

*Consumer test - Day cream 107 women after 60 seconds - Night cream 110 women after 60 seconds.

ELLE

STYLE + SHOP

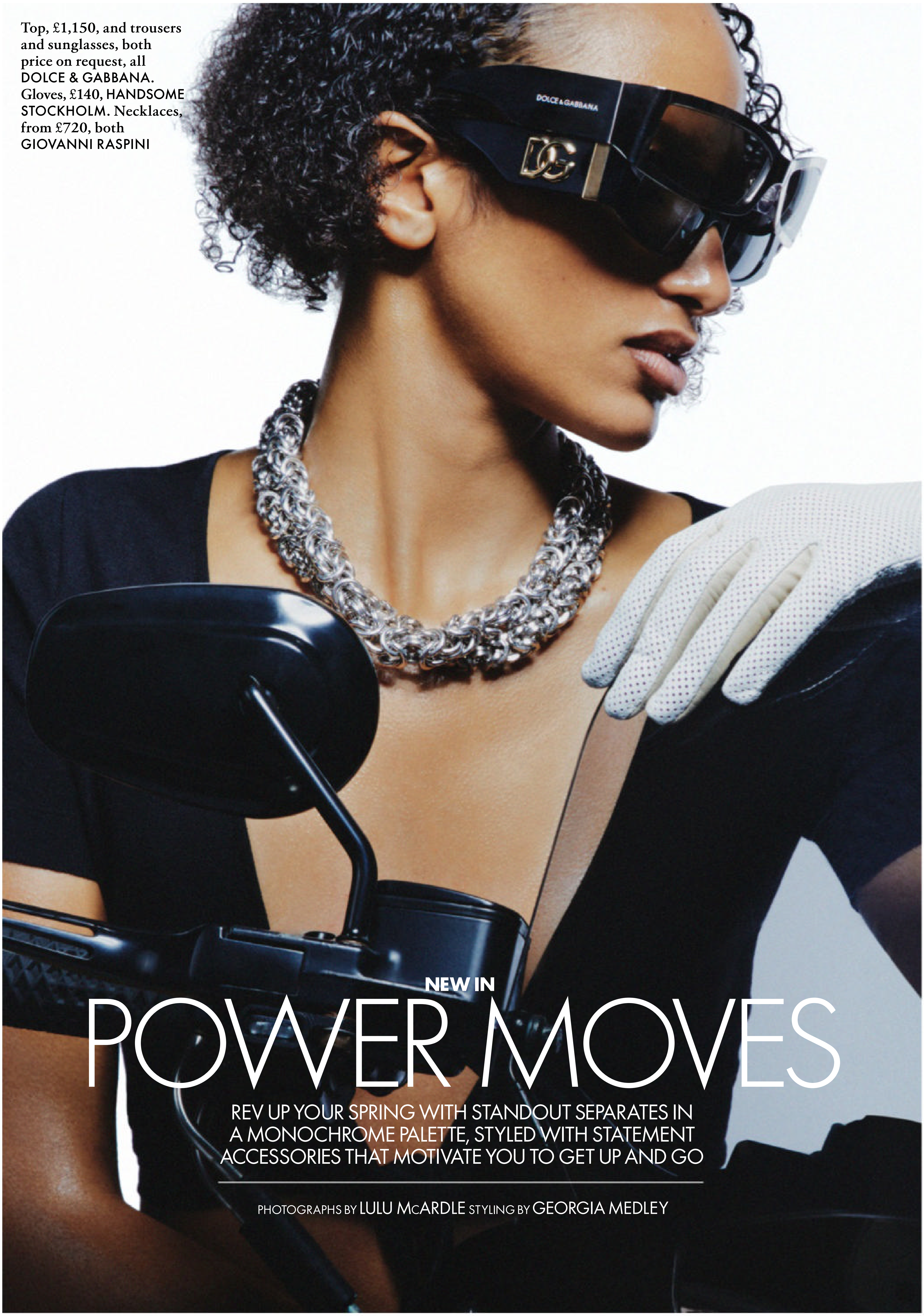
READY FOR ANYTHING

THIS MONTH, WE'RE MAKING MOVES – AND NOTHING IS HOLDING US BACK. FROM ALL-WEATHER DRESSING THAT WILL HAVE YOU LAUGHING IN THE FACE OF APRIL SHOWERS TO GO-FASTER GEAR FOR WOMEN ON A MISSION, WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE – AND THE RIGHT WARDROBE – THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

Helmet, £1,450, and blazer, £3,300, both LOUIS VUITTON.
Top, price on request, ELISA POPPY

WORDS: ALICE WIGNALL. PHOTOGRAPH: LULU McARDLE

Top, £1,150, and trousers and sunglasses, both price on request, all DOLCE & GABBANA. Gloves, £140, HANDSOME STOCKHOLM. Necklaces, from £720, both GIOVANNI RASPINI

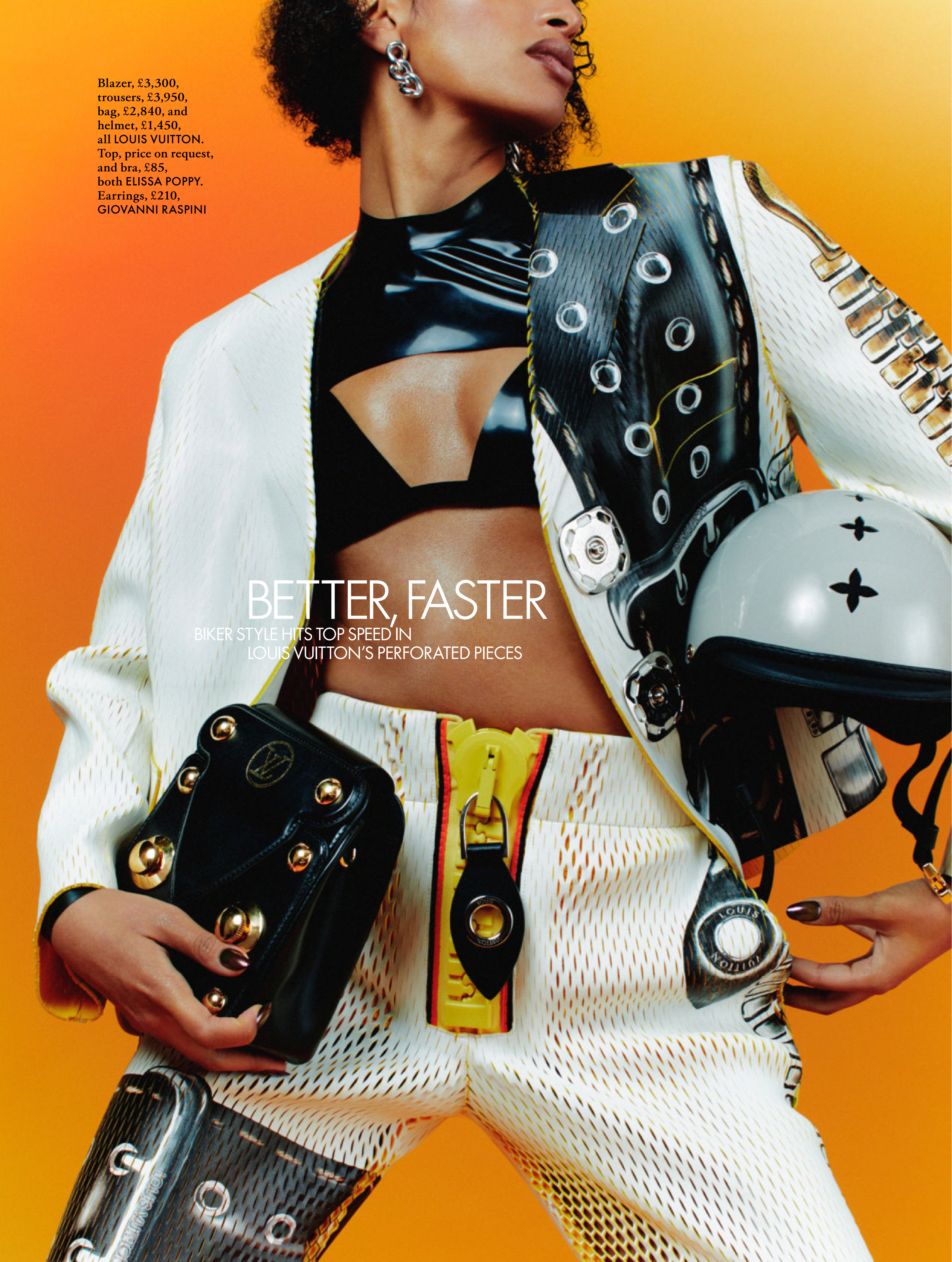


NEW IN

POWER MOVES

REV UP YOUR SPRING WITH STANDOUT SEPARATES IN A MONOCHROME PALETTE, STYLED WITH STATEMENT ACCESSORIES THAT MOTIVATE YOU TO GET UP AND GO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LULU McARDLE STYLING BY GEORGIA MEDLEY



Blazer, £3,300,
trousers, £3,950,
bag, £2,840, and
helmet, £1,450,
all LOUIS VUITTON.
Top, price on request,
and bra, £85,
both ELISSA POPPY.
Earrings, £210,
GIOVANNI RASPINI

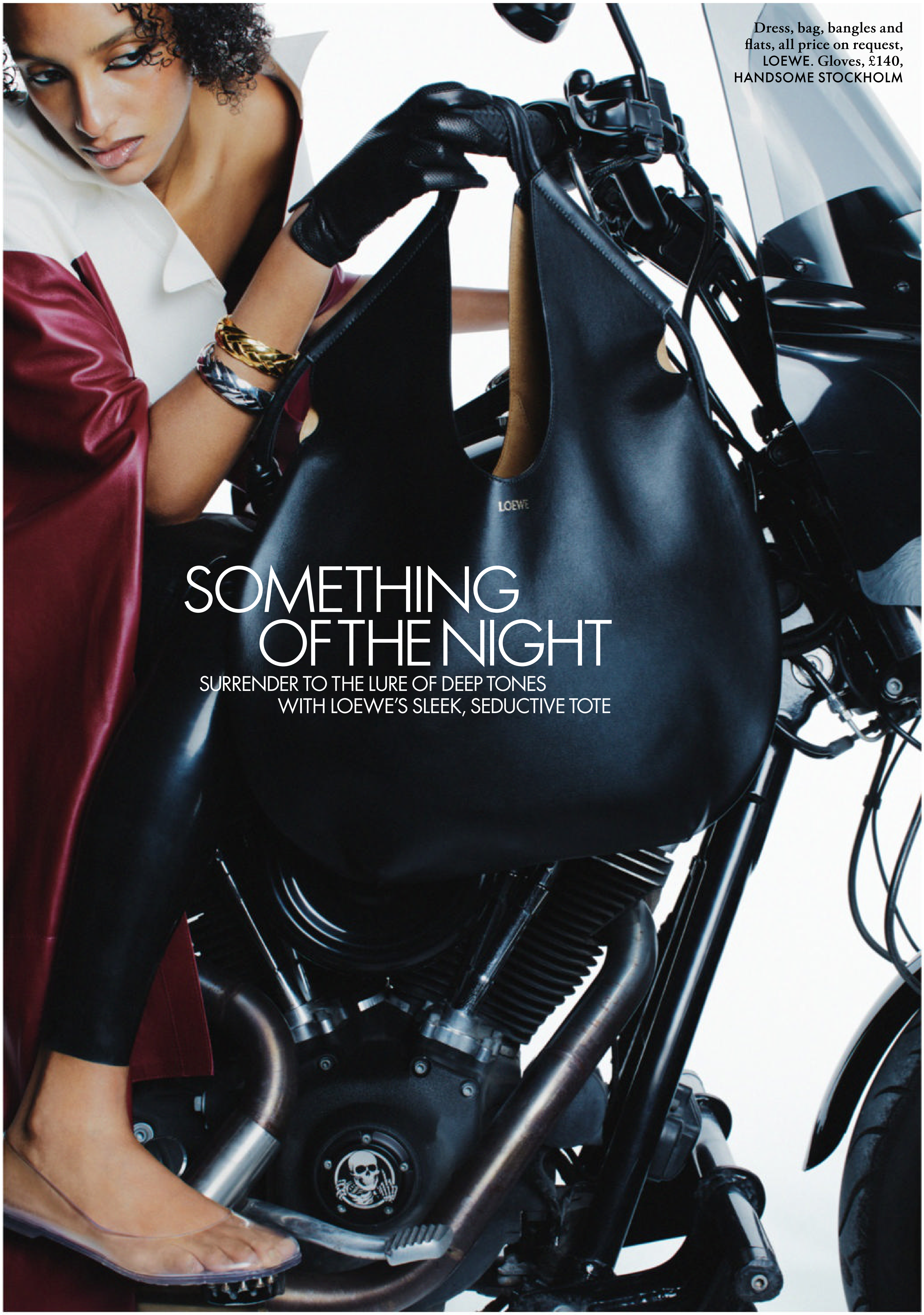
BETTER, FASTER

BIKER STYLE HITS TOP SPEED IN
LOUIS VUITTON'S PERFORATED PIECES

SKIN DEEP

WEAR LEATHER ON LEATHER, WITH FIERCE HARDWARE MIXED IN, FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

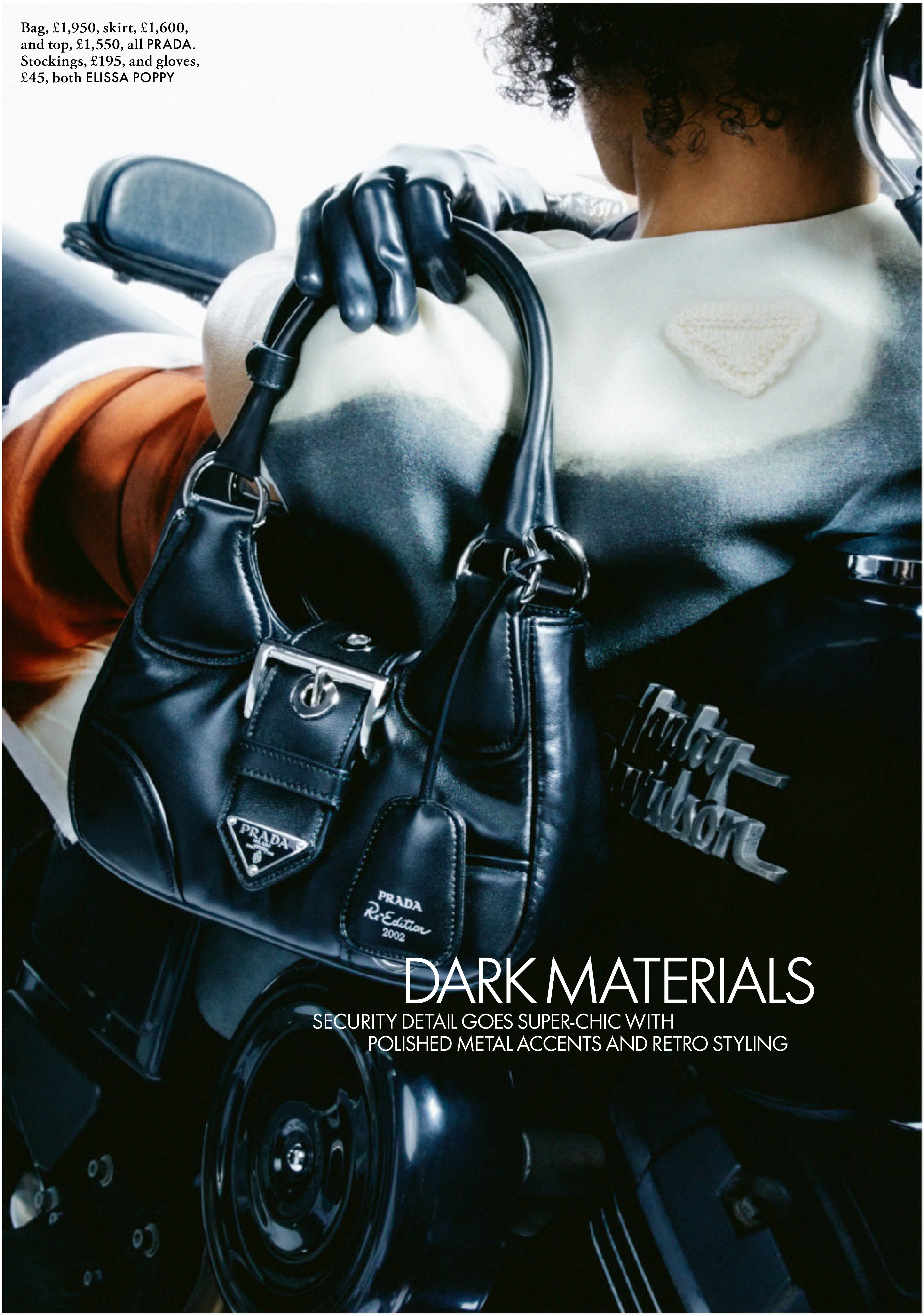
Jacket, £4,980, skirt, £4,080, bag, £2,430, sunglasses, price on request, earrings, £610, and necklace, £3,080, all GUCCI



Dress, bag, bangles and flats, all price on request, LOEWE. Gloves, £140, HANDSOME STOCKHOLM

SOMETHING OF THE NIGHT

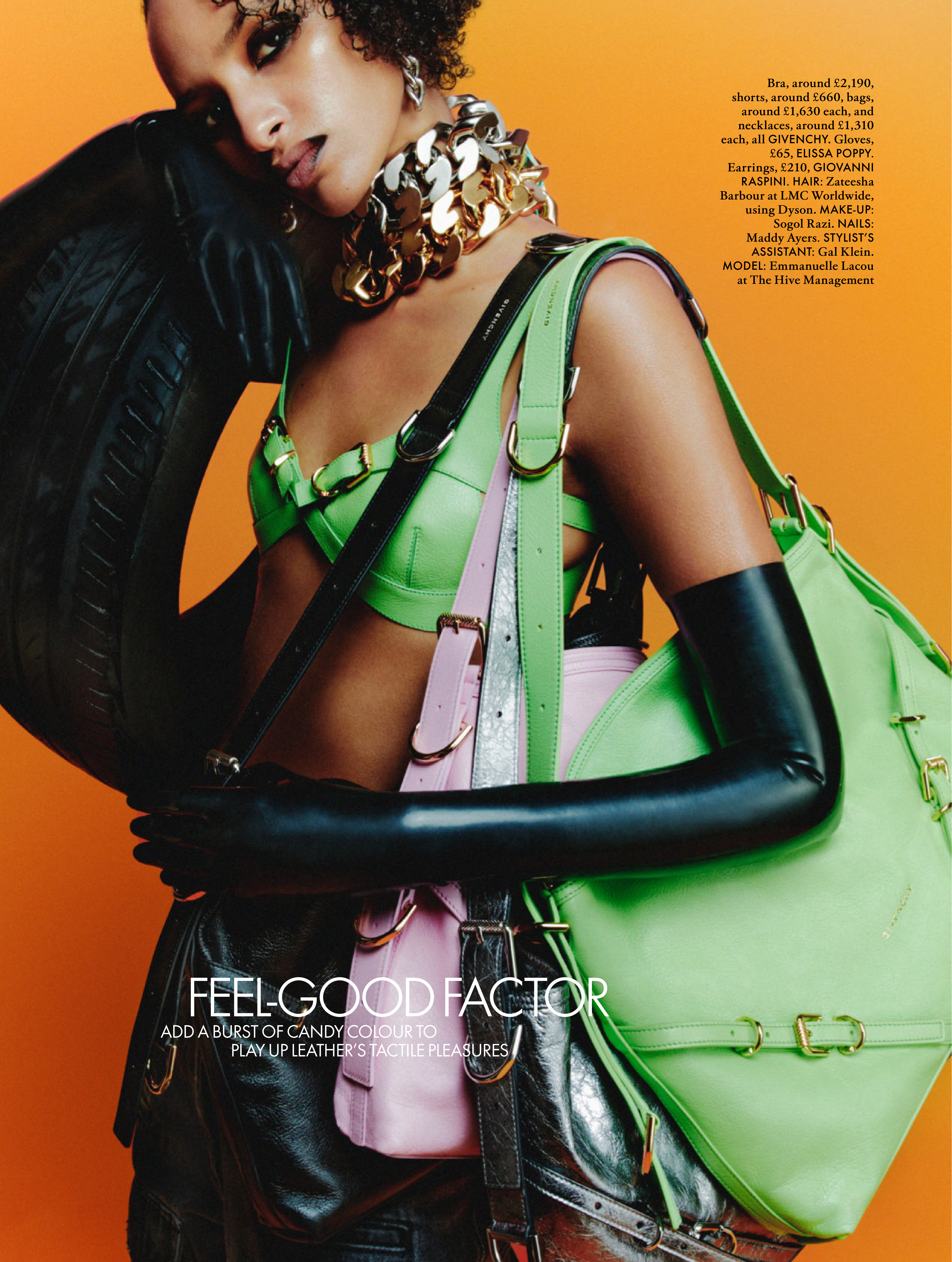
SURRENDER TO THE LURE OF DEEP TONES WITH LOEWE'S SLEEK, SEDUCTIVE TOTE


PRADA
PRADA
Re-Edition
2002
Harley-Davidson

Bag, £1,950, skirt, £1,600, and top, £1,550, all PRADA. Stockings, £195, and gloves, £45, both ELISSA POPPY

DARK MATERIALS

SECURITY DETAIL GOES SUPER-CHIC WITH POLISHED METAL ACCENTS AND RETRO STYLING



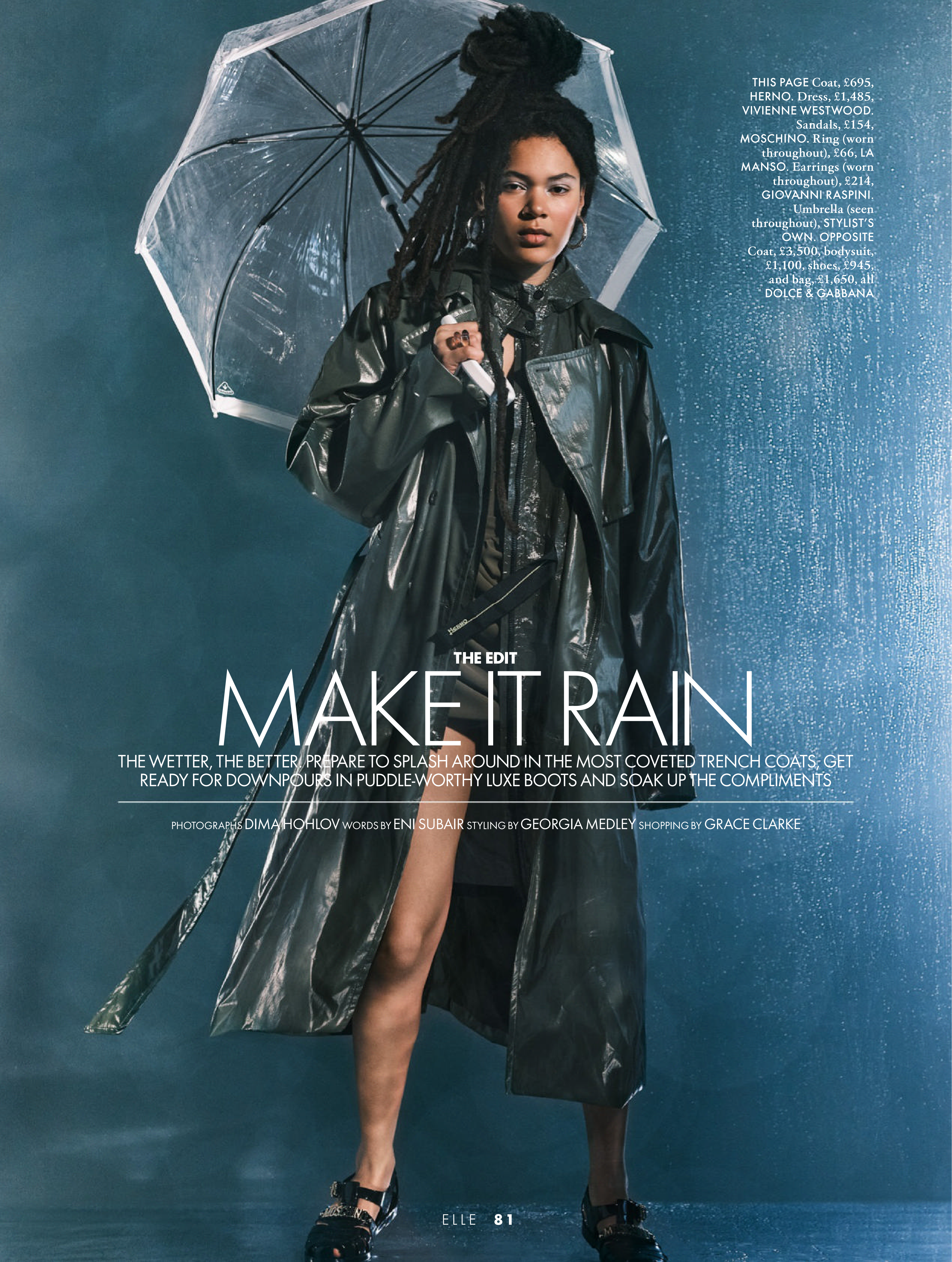
Bra, around £2,190, shorts, around £660, bags, around £1,630 each, and necklaces, around £1,310 each, all GIVENCHY. Gloves, £65, ELISSA POPPY. Earrings, £210, GIOVANNI RASPINI. HAIR: Zateesha Barbour at LMC Worldwide, using Dyson. MAKE-UP: Sogol Razi. NAILS: Maddy Ayers. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: Gal Klein. MODEL: Emmanuelle Lacou at The Hive Management

FEEL-GOOD FACTOR

ADD A BURST OF CANDY COLOUR TO PLAY UP LEATHER'S TACTILE PLEASURES

WHATEVER THE WEATHER

DON'T LET A POOR FORECAST DICTATE YOUR OUTFIT CHOICE:
IT'LL STILL BE ON SHOW IN A SEE-THROUGH MAC



THE EDIT

MAKE IT RAIN

THE WETTER, THE BETTER. PREPARE TO SPLASH AROUND IN THE MOST COVETED TRENCH COATS, GET READY FOR DOWNPOURS IN PUDDLE-WORTHY LUXE BOOTS AND SOAK UP THE COMPLIMENTS

PHOTOGRAPHS DIMA HOHLOV WORDS BY ENI SUBAIR STYLING BY GEORGIA MEDLEY SHOPPING BY GRACE CLARKE

THIS PAGE Coat, £695, HERNO. Dress, £1,485, VIVIENNE WESTWOOD. Sandals, £154, MOSCHINO. Ring (worn throughout), £66, LA MANSO. Earrings (worn throughout), £214, GIOVANNI RASPINI. Umbrella (seen throughout), STYLIST'S OWN. OPPOSITE Coat, £3,500, bodysuit, £1,100, shoes, £945, and bag, £1,650, all DOLCE & GABBANA

1

2

3

4

6

5

7

9

8

10

11

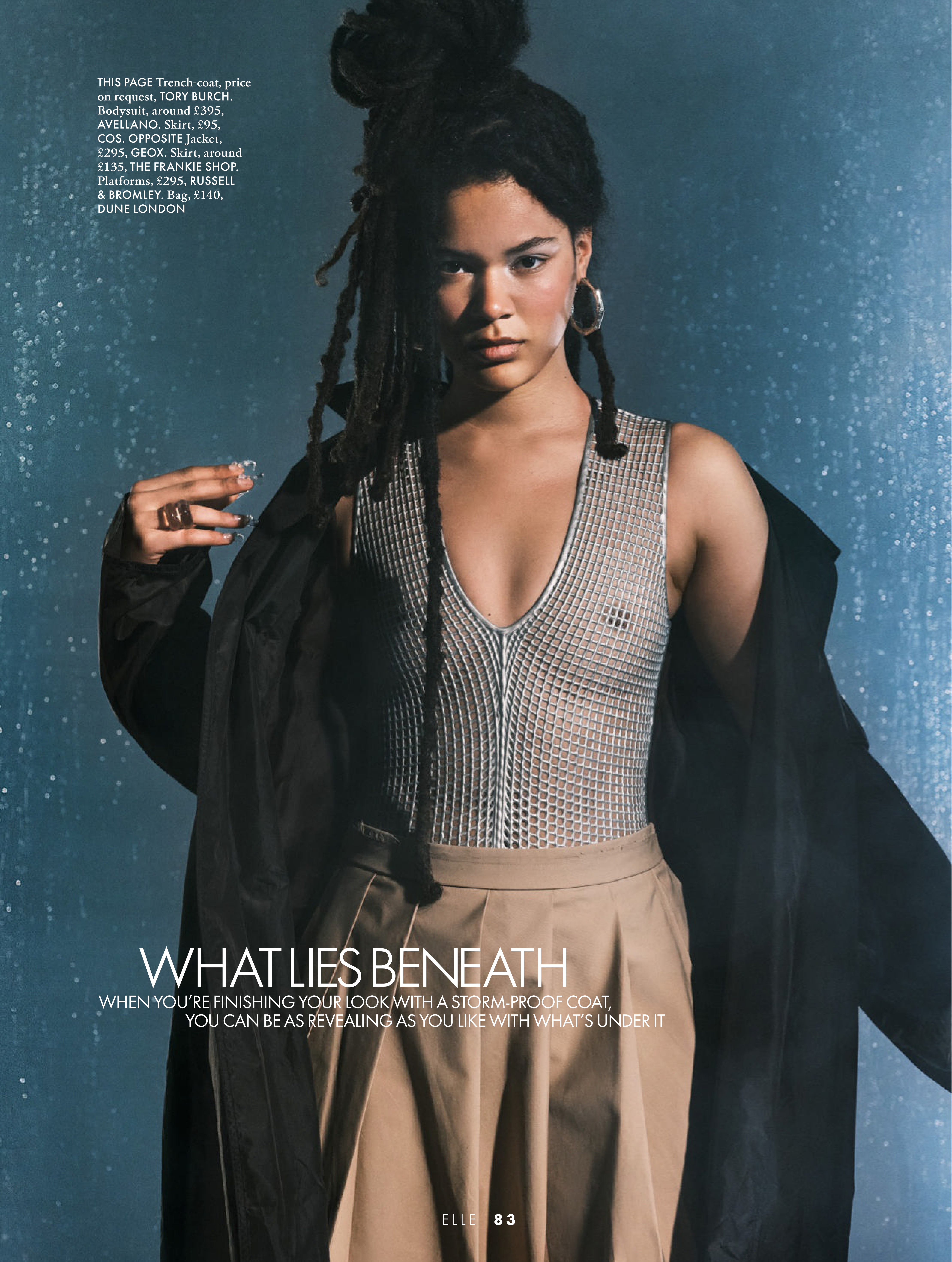
12

13

14

15

1 Jacket, £485, JACQUEMUS **2** Jacket, £795, MARFA STANCE **3** Trainers, £49.99, MANGO **4** Earrings, £15, MARKS & SPENCER **5** Bag, £26, NEXT **6** Skirt, £3,700, PRADA **7** Jacket, price on request, AHLUWALIA **8** Shoes, £90, DUNE LONDON **9** Top, £1,790, MOLLY GODDARD **10** Earrings, £180, GIOVANNI RASPINI **11** Jacket, £1,600, MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION **12** Bag, £1,090, CHLOĒ **13** Jumper, £80, LEVI'S **14** Top, £225, GANNI **15** Earrings, £80, EMPORIO ARMANI



THIS PAGE Trench-coat, price on request, TORY BURCH. Bodysuit, around £395, AVELLANO. Skirt, £95, COS. OPPOSITE Jacket, £295, GEOX. Skirt, around £135, THE FRANKIE SHOP. Platforms, £295, RUSSELL & BROMLEY. Bag, £140, DUNE LONDON

WHAT LIES BENEATH

WHEN YOU'RE FINISHING YOUR LOOK WITH A STORM-PROOF COAT, YOU CAN BE AS REVEALING AS YOU LIKE WITH WHAT'S UNDER IT

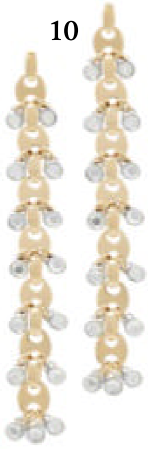
THUNDERSTRUCK

SEEK REFUGE FROM THE RAIN WITH LAYERED-UP PERFORMANCE FABRICS IN DIFFERENT FITS AND FINISHES

THIS PAGE Top, £295, **MAX MARA**. Coat and skirt, both price on request, **DSQUARED2**. Underwear, price on request, **MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION**. Flats, £595, **LOEWE**. Hair clips (sold as pair) £64, **LA MANSO**. **OPPOSITE** Jacket, £1,150, and cape, £990, both **MONCLER**. Bomber jacket, £645, **HERNO**. Top coat, price on request, **THE FRANKIE SHOP**. Leggings, price on request, **DSQUARED2**. Loafers, £190, **MOSCHINO**. Bag, £215, **MARC CAIN**

6

7


10

11

14

5

8

12

13

15

4

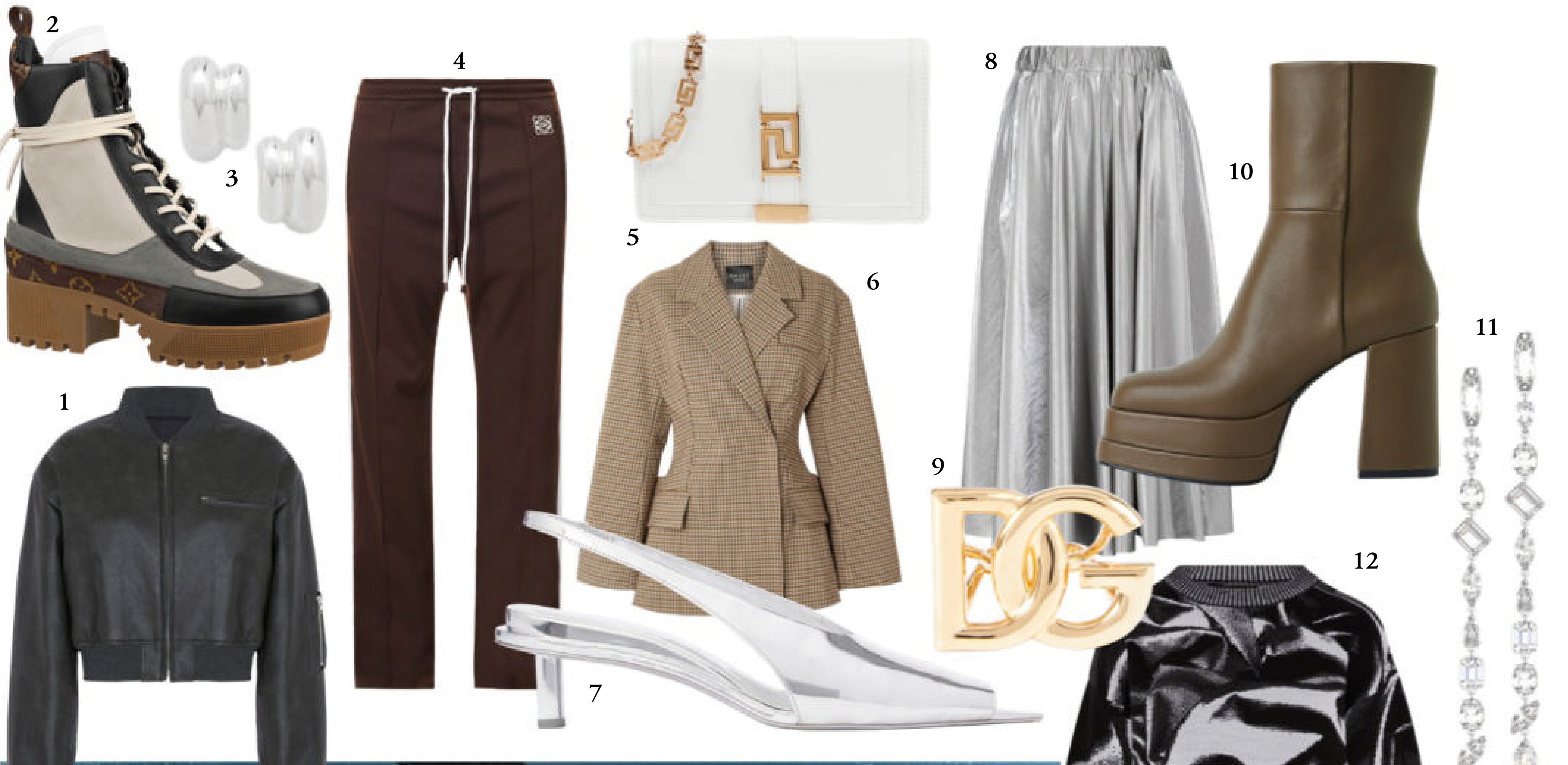
3

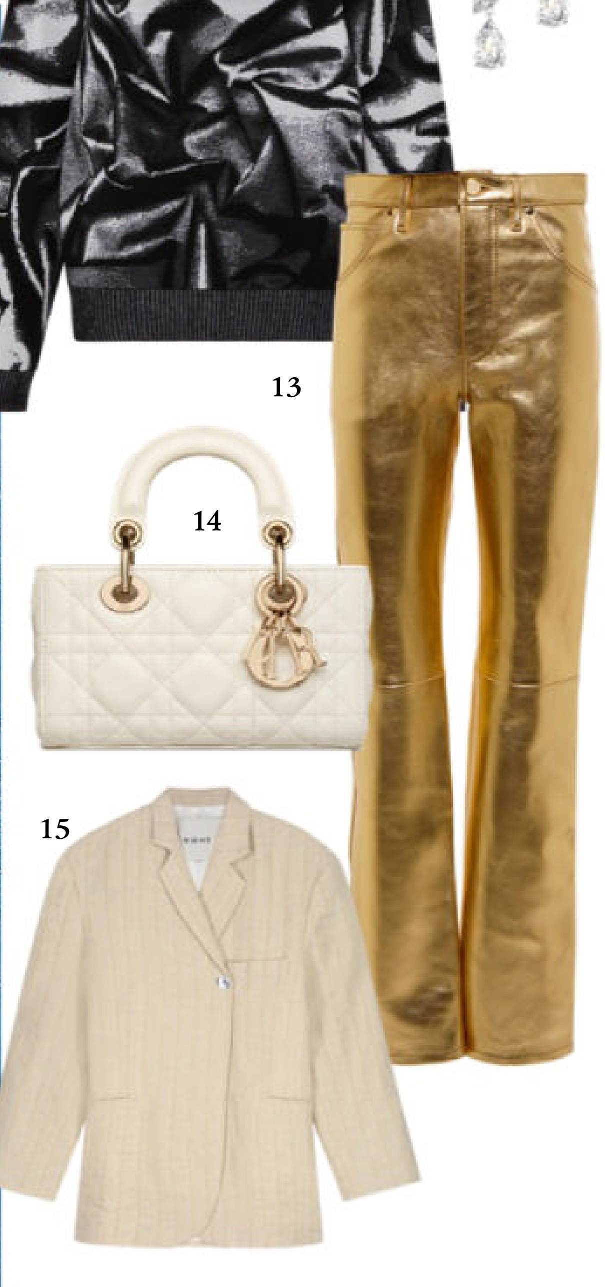
9

2

1

1 Sandals, £960, FERRAGAMO **2** Skirt, £495, VIVIENNE WESTWOOD **3** Bag, £650, JW ANDERSON **4** Earrings, £90, PANDORA **5** Cardigan, £390, TOTEME **6** Trainers, £84.99, CONVERSE **7** Skirt, £275, GAUGE81 **8** Wedges, £295, RUSSELL & BROMLEY **9** Dress, £625, ANNA OCTOBER **10** Earrings, £320, PACO RABANNE **11** Bag, £440, RALPH LAUREN **12** Ring, £1,598, RAINBOW K **13** Boots, £75, HUNTER **14** Hat, £60, SAMSØE & SAMSØE **15** Raincoat, £395, GANNI





1 Jacket, £273, THE FRANKIE SHOP **2** Boots, £1,230, LOUIS VUITTON **3** Earrings, £17, COS **4** Trousers, £625, LOEWE **5** Bag, £1,100, VERSACE **6** Jacket, £835, AWAKE MODE at NET-A-PORTER **7** Shoes, £390, TORY BURCH **8** Skirt, £370, MONCLER **9** Ring, £325, DOLCE & GABBANA **10** Boots, £39.99, H&M **11** Earrings, £175, SWAROVSKI **12** Knit, £495, AGR KNIT **13** Trousers, £985, DODO BAR OR **14** Bag, £2,600, DIOR **15** Jacket, £520, RÕHE FRAMES

THIS PAGE Jacket, £390, STINE GOYA. T-shirt, £380, TORY BURCH. Skirt, £1,100, MOLLY GODDARD. Bag, £530, MONCLER. Boots, £125, HUNTER. OPPOSITE Top, £283, sarong, £705, and belt, £440, all MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION. Coat, £825, VIVIENNE WESTWOOD. Boots, £125, HUNTER. Bag, £215, MARC CAIN

HAIR: Zateesha Barbour at LMC Worldwide, using Dyson. MAKE-UP: Sogol Razi. NAILS: Maddy Ayers. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: Gal Klein. SET DESIGNER: Elena Horn. MODEL: Maya Bosman at Elite

HERE COMES THE SUN

AFTER A GREY DAY, WHO CAN RESIST THE GLEAM OF A GOLDEN PRAIRIE SKIRT? STYLE IT WITH A CLOUD-LIKE MOLLY GODDARD BAG AND A BOMBER JACKET YOU'LL TAKE FOR A SPIN COME RAIN OR SHINE

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE 59%

6 MONTHS OF ELLE FOR JUST £9.99

ELLE
APRIL 2023 £4.99
New Romance
THE RISE OF SOFT-GIRL STYLE
+
PLEASURE IN A SEX RECESSION
THE EUPHORIA OF HUNTER SCHAFER

FREE GIFT **WORTH** £22!*

HERLUM
LONDON
HERLUM
LONDON

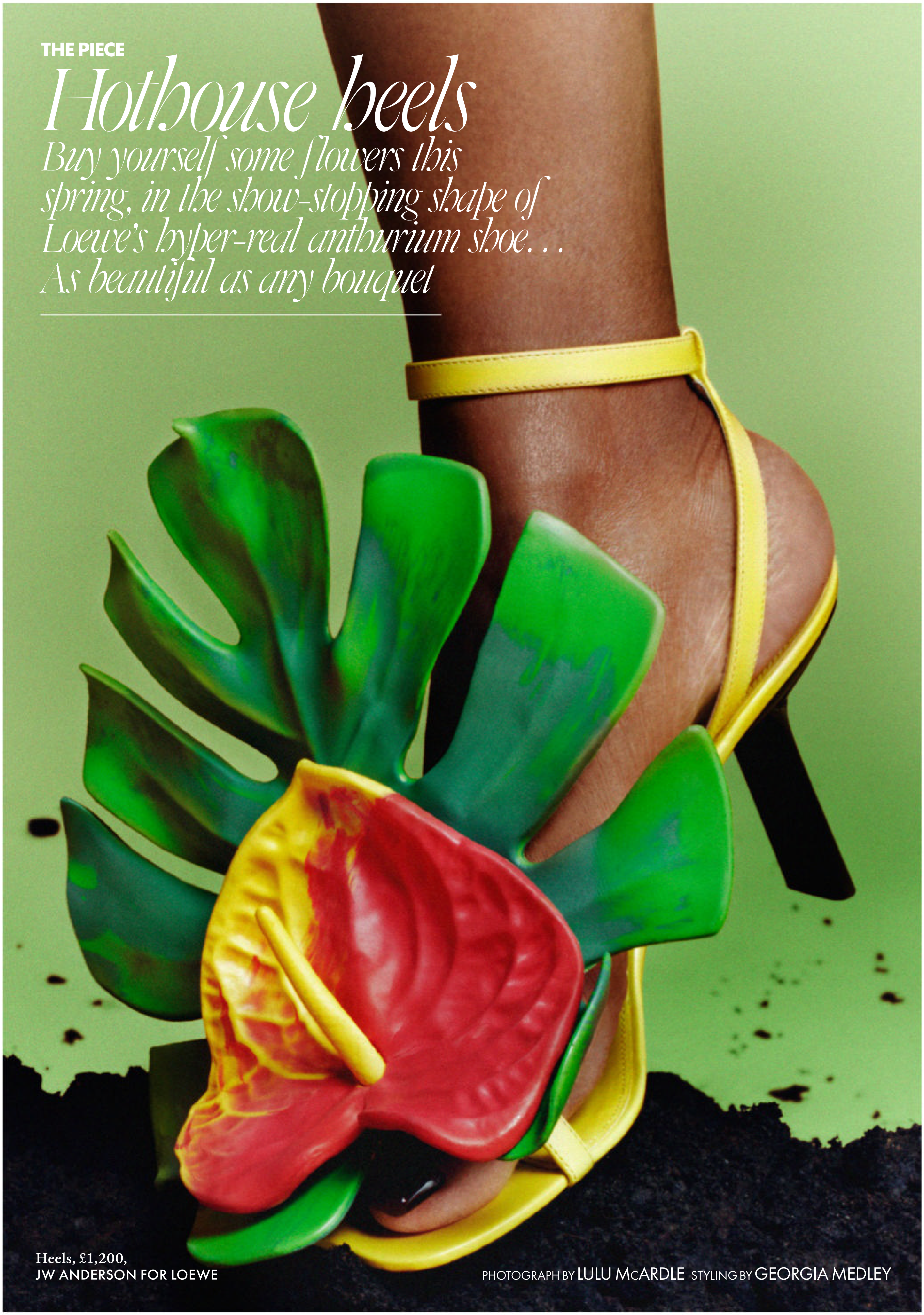
ONLY ~~£4.99~~ £2 **PER ISSUE**

Instant access

+RECEIVE FREE INSTANT DIGITAL ACCESS TO THE LATEST ISSUE**

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR LOWEST PRICE
HEARSTMAGAZINES.CO.UK/ELLE-MAG
OR CALL 01858 438796 AND QUOTE 1ES12462

Lines open weekdays, 8am-9.30pm; Saturdays, 8am-4pm. Calls are charged at your network's standard rate. Please check with your network provider for more details. Terms and conditions: this offer is valid for new UK subscriptions. After your first 5 issues, your subscription will continue at £19.99 every 6 months unless you are notified otherwise. All savings are based on the standard cover price. *Limited stock available; if stock runs out, an alternative gift will be delivered. **Subscribe online at hearstmagazines.co.uk/elle-mag to receive the link to the latest issue in your confirmation email. Subscriptions may not include promotional items packaged with the magazine. All orders will be acknowledged, and you will be advised of the start issue within 14 days. Subscriptions may be cancelled by providing 28 days' notice. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other subscription offer and closes on 29 March 2023. For UK subscription enquiries, please call 01858 438796. For our data policy, visit hearst.co.uk/privacy-notice. All information is correct at the time of going to press.



THE PIECE

Hothouse heels

Buy yourself some flowers this spring, in the show-stopping shape of Loewe's hyper-real anthurium shoe… As beautiful as any bouquet

Heels, £1,200,
JW ANDERSON FOR LOEWE

PHOTOGRAPH BY LULU McARDLE STYLING BY GEORGIA MEDLEY

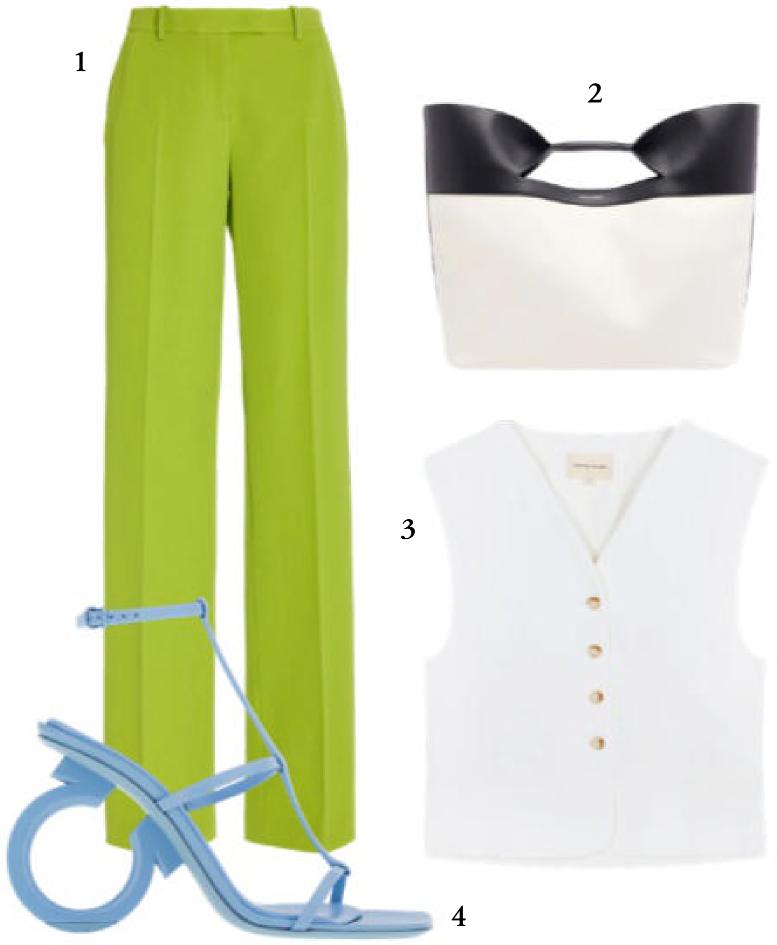
WORDS: ENI SUBAIR. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: GAL KLEIN

DRESS CODE

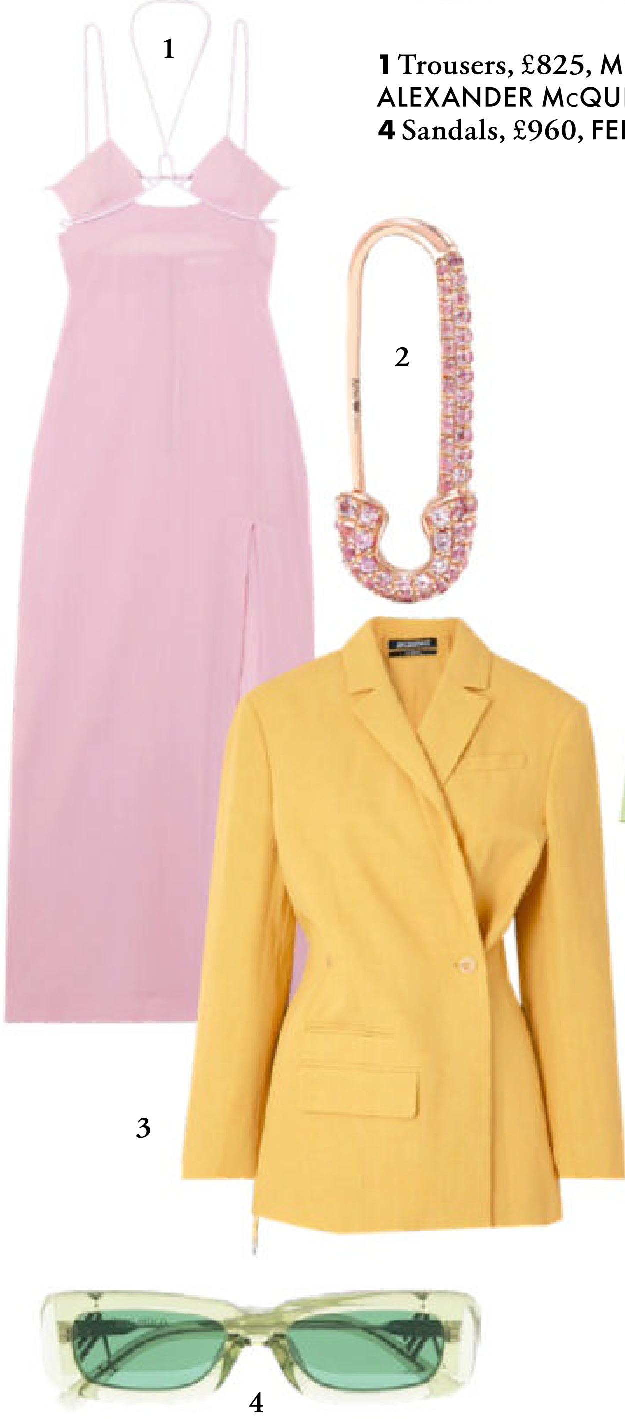
WORK? LIFE? BALANCE!

YES, EVEN DAY-TO-NIGHT DRESSING HAS UNDERGONE A POST-PANDEMIC UPGRADE WITH STANDOUT SILHOUETTES AND HUES

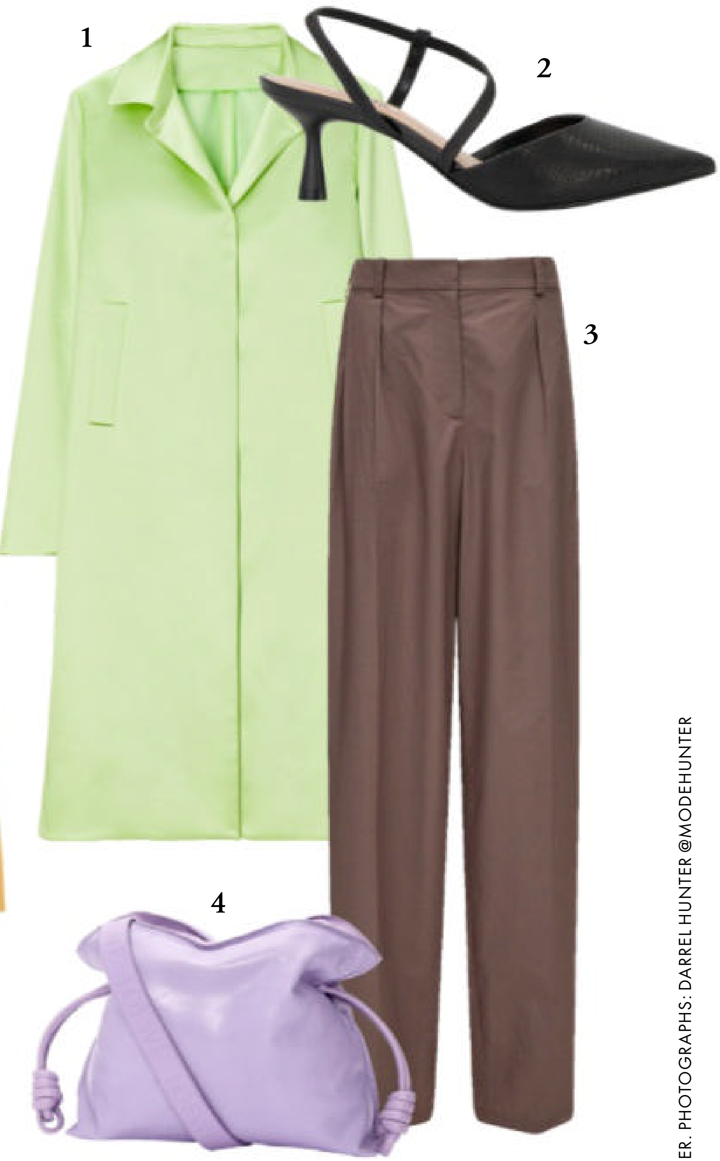
YOU'RE MEETING FRIENDS IN TOWN STRAIGHT AFTER work, but don't want to lug an outfit change to the office. Sound familiar? Colour-blocked pastels, crisp suiting and strong accessories perform just as well in meetings as they do at happy hour, giving your boardroom look a mood-boosting transformation.



1 Trousers, £825, MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION **2** Bag, £1,590, ALEXANDER McQUEEN **3** Waistcoat, £220, LOU LOU STUDIO **4** Sandals, £960, FERRAGAMO



1 Dress, £1,014, NENSI DOJAKA **2** Earring, £875, ANITA KO **3** Jacket, £915, JACQUEMUS **4** Sunglasses, £215, THE ATTICO X LINDA FARROW



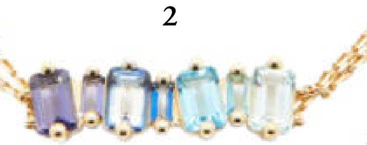
1 Coat, £1,600, TORY BURCH **2** Heels, £85, DUNE **3** Trousers, £425, JOSEPH **4** Bag, £2,100, LOEWE

WORDS: EVE WALKER. PHOTOGRAPHS: DARREL HUNTER @MODEHUNTER

1 Mules, £480, WANDLER **2** Trousers, £375, REJINA PYO **3** Top, £325, JW ANDERSON **4** Earrings, £355, CELINE BY HEDI SLIMANE

1 Top, £165, GAUGE81 **2** Earrings, £508, CHLOĒ at NET-A-PORTER **3** Skirt, £350, TOTEME **4** Boots, £695, NEOUS

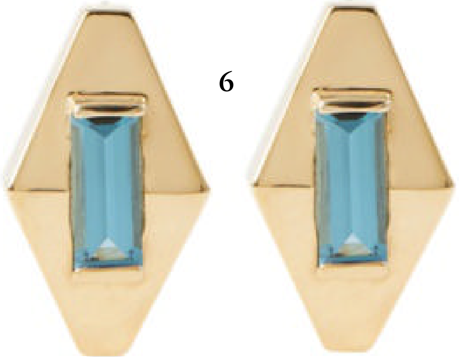
1


2

3

4

5


6

7

8

THROWING SHAPES

DITCH THE DAINTY AND EMBRACE THE BOLD WITH OUT-THERE, GEOMETRIC JEWELLERY

9

10

11

12

13

14

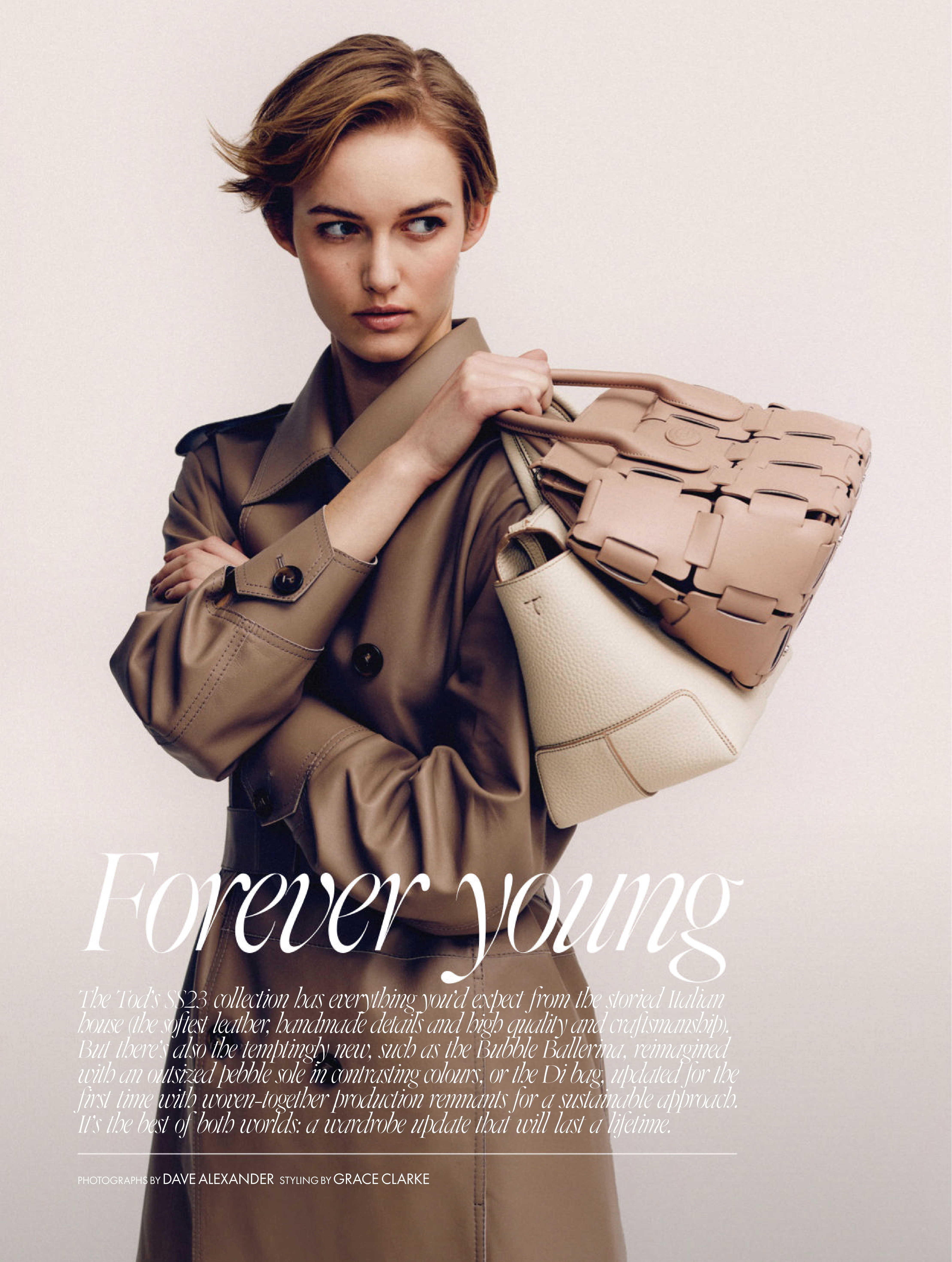
15

1 Rose gold earrings, £6,650, CARTIER **2** Gold and topaz bracelet, £1,870, SUZANNE KALAN at MATCHESFASHION **3** Gold and amethyst earrings, £2,505, HARWELL GODFREY **4** Gold and diamond ring, £3,010, CHANEL FINE JEWELLERY **5** Gold and citrine necklace, price on request, TIFFANY & CO **6** Gold earrings, £1,391, ALIITA at MYTHERESA **7** Gold and tourmaline ring, £3,440, GUCCI **8** Gold, citrine and diamond earrings, £3,443, MATEO **9** Gold and diamond ring, £5,145, AZLEE **10** Gold and tourmaline ring, £5,250, MINKA JEWELS **11** Gold and amethyst ring, £2,918, RETROUVAI at MATCHESFASHION **12** Gold and diamond earrings, £6,800, BULGARI **13** Rose gold and jade bangle, £8,345, ROBERTO COIN **14** Gold, diamond and emerald necklace, £3,483, SHAY **15** Gold, diamond and ruby bracelet, £770, ANISSA KERMICHE

SPHERICA™ ACTIF
Feel the energy of your steps
GEOX

Discover **Spherica™ Actif**, the new footwear by Geox which cushions the impact of every step and gives you an energy boost, thanks to the innovative **Zero Shock System with Energy Effect**.

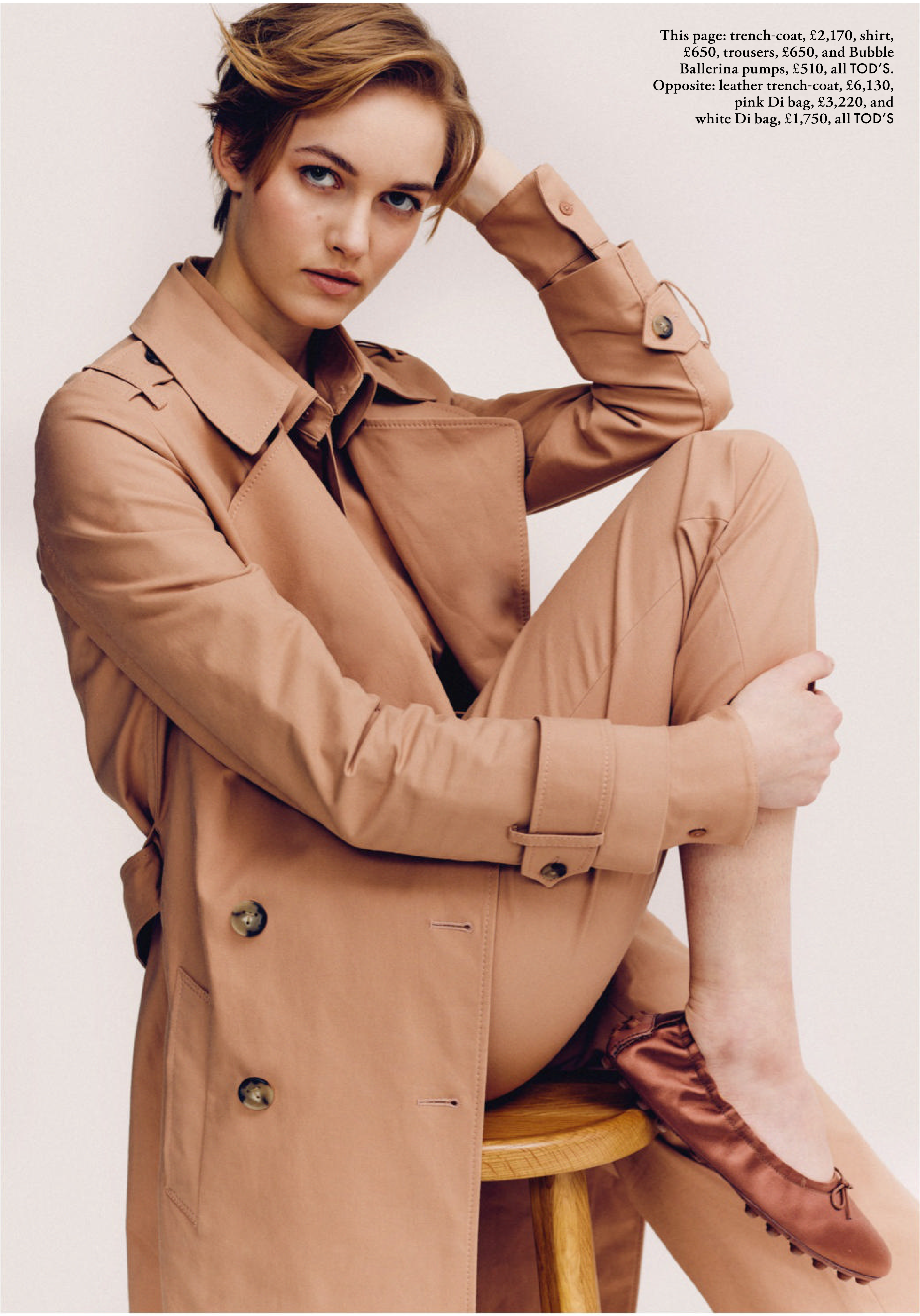
In-store and at **geox.com**



Forever young

The Tod's SS23 collection has everything you'd expect from the storied Italian house (the softest leather, handmade details and high quality and craftsmanship). But there's also the temptingly new, such as the Bubble Ballerina, reimagined with an outsized pebble sole in contrasting colours, or the Di bag, updated for the first time with woven-together production remnants for a sustainable approach. It's the best of both worlds: a wardrobe update that will last a lifetime.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE ALEXANDER STYLING BY GRACE CLARKE



This page: trench-coat, £2,170, shirt, £650, trousers, £650, and Bubble Ballerina pumps, £510, all TOD'S. Opposite: leather trench-coat, £6,130, pink Di bag, £3,220, and white Di bag, £1,750, all TOD'S

HAIR: ABRA KENNEDY, USING HAIR BY SAM McKNIGHT. MAKE-UP: ALEXIS DAY, USING CLÉ DE PEAU BEAUTÉ. MODEL: ERIN HARRISON AT PREMIER MODEL MANAGEMENT

AVAXHOME -

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: brand new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price
Cheap constant access to piping hot media
Protect your downloadings from Big brother
Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages
Brand new content
One site

AVXLIVE.ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open https://avxlive.icu

W

Walpole is the only industry body protecting, promoting and developing the finest and most famous British luxury brands.

Get the latest luxury news, insights and invitations in your inbox each day – sign up to the Daily Luxury Digest here:

DISCOVER MORE AT
THEWALPOLE.CO.UK

ILLUSTRATION BY COLE & SON

ELLE

FASHION + READS

SPRING IS HERE, SO WEAR YOUR HEART ON YOUR SLEEVE IN FASHION THAT DEMANDS AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE, THEN READ SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE WRITERS ON THE FUTURE OF SEX, THE WEDDING DRESSES OF DREAMS AND THEIR MOST ROMANTICALLY CONSEQUENTIAL FIRSTS. AND OUR COVER STAR, HUNTER SCHAFER, TALKS FRIENDSHIP, CREATIVITY AND WHAT MAKES HER SOUL SING

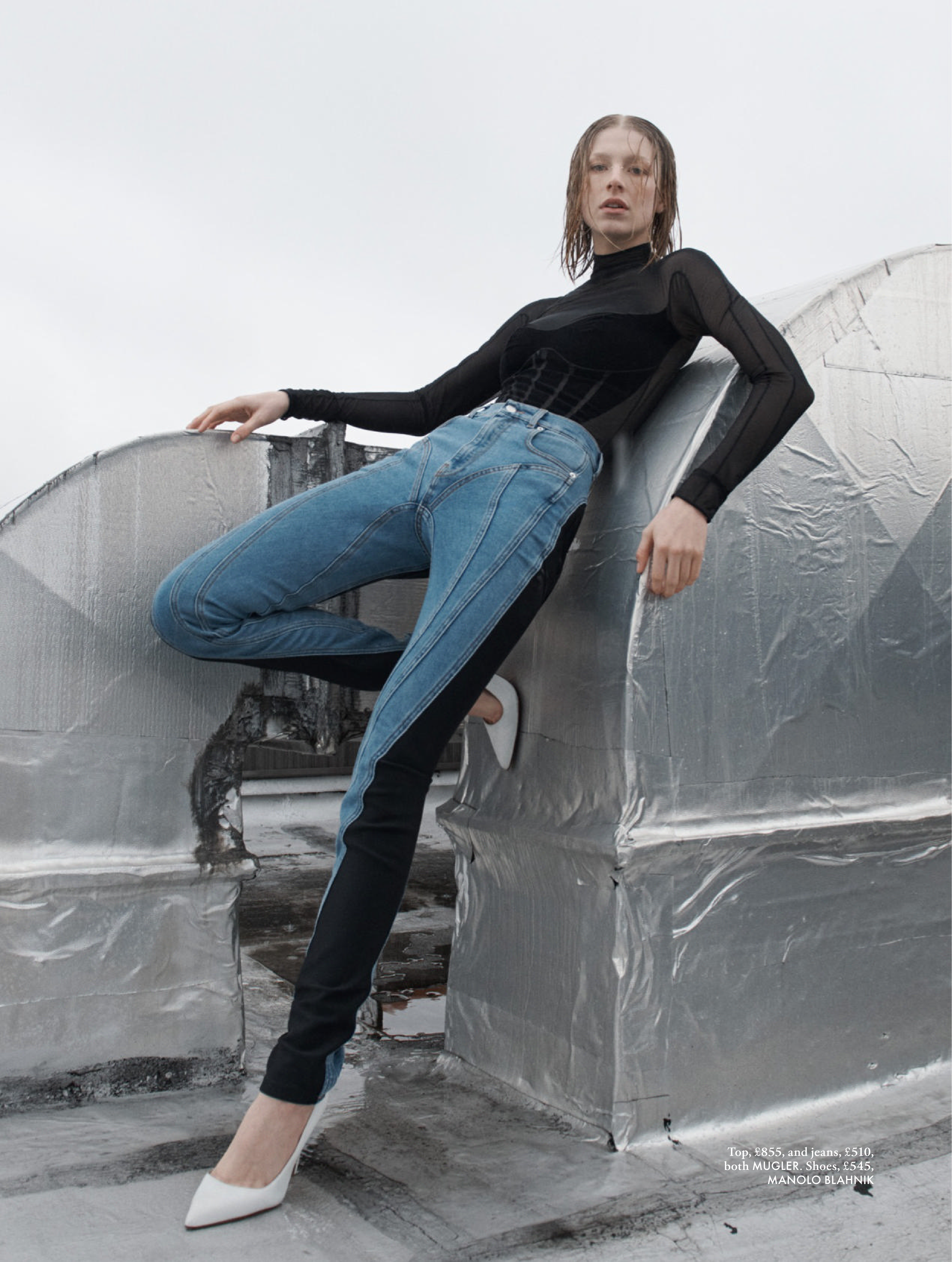
PHOTOGRAPH: PAOLA KUDACKI.
BODY, £865, MUGLER

Leaning in

She won our hearts playing Jules in Euphoria. Now, as she becomes the new face of Mugler – and with a burgeoning film career in the works – we are fully infatuated. Lynette Nylander succumbs to the allure of

Hunter Schafer

Photographs by Paola Kudacki Styling by Carolina Orrico


Top, £855, and jeans, £510, both MUGLER. Shoes, £545, MANOLO BLAHNIK

ON THE BUSY RESTAURANT FLOOR OF A MANHATTAN BOUTIQUE hotel, no one seems to be aware that a Hollywood star has entered the room. Hunter Schafer – make-up free and hair pulled back, dressed in an understated heather-grey sweater, tracksuit bottoms and trainers – is walking towards me with an earnest wave and a generous smile. Everyone around us is oblivious as we embrace and settle into our seats for lunch and our interview, one of her last stops before a night flight back to her home in Los Angeles.

A former New Yorker, Schafer relocated to the West Coast when she got the role as Jules Vaughn in HBO's *Euphoria*, to be closer to the studio. But she's in town for a few days of work. 'I love being in New York. I love my community here. Being in Los Angeles has made me more keen to protect those long-term relationships and friendships I made in that time,' she says, in between bites of gourmet Brussels sprouts and sips of coffee.

We first met during these New York years, when I was writing a piece on changemakers. She was then an 18-year-old model and an emerging name in the fight for trans rights. Six years on, she still has the endearingly calm nature that I remember, though much else has changed.

Schafer, who has just turned 24, is one of the stars of the hottest ensemble cast on television, with a slate of big movie releases on the way. She can't go anywhere without the gaze of her adoring fans. 'It depends on the setting, but I get recognised pretty much every day,' she says. 'I used to get really dressed up. I still love doing that. But I know that now comes with more attention. So I've learned to keep it a little more low-key.'

Her new-found recognisability is, of course, down to the wild popularity of *Euphoria*. The show, masterminded by Sam Levinson, is a disturbing and raw depiction of young people at the apex of teenagehood, dealing with dizzying highs and the lowest of lows. First released in 2019, it was a breakout success. Its cast, made up of young actors in the infancy of their careers – Zendaya, Sydney Sweeney, Alexa Demie, Maude Apatow, Storm Reid and Jacob Elordi – were catapulted to global fame.

'From the airing of the first episode to my first million followers on Instagram, it was, like, a month,' Schafer says (she now has 6.8 million). 'It was a huge adjustment, for sure. Nobody really knew if the show was going to hit like that, you know? It's strange, because I thought it would kind of level off after season one, but season two felt like it doubled in size.'

She credits Levinson with guiding her through the vertigo-inducing experience of fame. 'I always say Sam has been my biggest teacher, my acting school. I had to wing it and learn as I go, which is hard in front of millions of people.'

The most-recognised of the cast, and its lead, mononym Zendaya, became not only a best friend to Schafer but an anchor as they navigated the show's monumental success. 'There's a lot of real-life learning that's going on alongside our characters. It's a very involved relationship to play. [In real life] we are so close and we have a very sweet, soft, loving friendship,' she says.

I ask her about the biggest shift in her day-to-day. 'The social change. That's been pretty disorientating. But it's also things like the financial side of things. That side of my life has changed greatly and it's been amazing, but it's also been so important I channel that into things and people I care about,' she says.

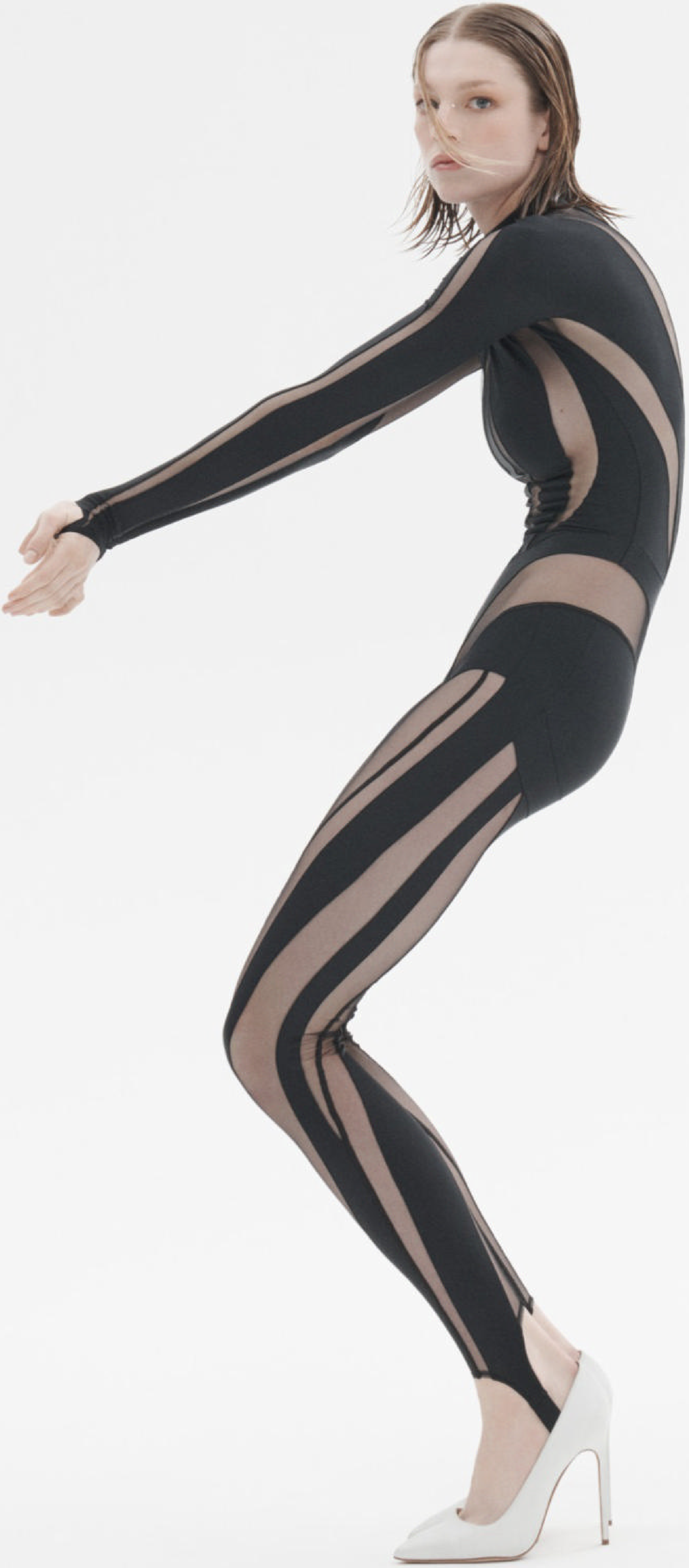
One such project is her quiet backing of her friend, the designer Gogo Graham, whose collection showed at New York Fashion Week for AW22. 'She is so talented and does everything herself. She needed hair and make-up teams and a venue, and I was so happy to support. It was such a great group of people. It was all trans folks. Just magic!'

Rather than film and television, Hunter originally had her sights set on art and fashion. Born in Trenton, New Jersey, she settled in North Carolina with her parents and younger siblings at nine. Much like her on-screen character in *Euphoria*, Schafer knew she wanted to transition from a young age. Her Presbyterian-minister father and mother were supportive.

She was an early contributor to Tavi Gevinson's Noughties blogging site *Rookie* and was offered a place to study fashion design at Central Saint Martins, a course she planned to fund with her modelling jobs. Then life sent her on a different path. 'It was my [modelling] agency that told me about the audition for *Euphoria*,' she says. 'I think every trans girl at the time got the call. They asked me to come in for a reading, but I wasn't looking for it.' ▷

'I get recognised pretty much every day. I used to get really dressed up. I still love doing that. But that comes with more attention, so I've learned to keep it low-key'

Jacket, £2,670, MUGLER



THIS PAGE Bodysuit, £880,
MUGLER. Shoes, £545,
MANOLO BLAHNIK.
OPPOSITE Dress, £1,195,
CHRISTOPHER KANE

Dress, £2,400, PRADA

'When I first started reading scripts, people just wanted to send me roles like Jules or about how I identify. I got scared of getting stuck in the same sort of role'

With the pandemic throwing off the filming schedule and the long-awaited third season still some time away, Schafer has had the opportunity to delve into her first movie roles. There's her upcoming horror film, *Cuckoo*, in which her character Gretchen moves to a resort with her family in Germany before she encounters a strange woman and a chilling conspiracy. 'When I first started reading scripts, people just wanted to send me a lot of roles like Jules or about how I identify. I got a little scared of getting stuck in the same sort of role over and over again,' she says. 'I've been pretty intentional about making sure everything feels a step away from the other and a little bit different.'

Schafer also stars in *The Lobster* and *The Favourite* director Yorgos Lanthimos' upcoming film *Poor Things*, which also has Emma Stone and Willem Dafoe in the cast, though she modestly plays it down. 'It's a little cameo, like two scenes. It's cool though, and it's great to be in there. We'd never met before but [Lanthimos] had seen *Euphoria* and was keeping my name around in case a part came up. So, when it did, I flew down to the set in New Orleans immediately.'

From indie to blockbuster, she ends the year with a part in the next instalment of the *Hunger Games* franchise, *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*, alongside Viola Davis, Jason Schwartzman and Peter Dinklage, which will no doubt appeal to her already devoted *Euphoria* audience.

With more and more eyes on her blossoming career, Schafer has quickly become a red-carpet darling, making impressions with her daring and sophisticated sense of style. Prada took notice early, signing her to a multi-year deal that has seen her walk the runway and feature in campaigns across accessories and clothing. 'I met [Miuccia Prada] when I walked Miu Miu,' Hunter says. 'But we've now formed a relationship and she's incredibly cool.'

The beauty world has also been orbiting the young star. Her new role, as Mugler's spokesperson for its perfume Mugler Angel Elixir, is the perfect example. Based on the iconic 1990s original (the scent broke boundaries as the world's first gourmand perfume, thanks to its praline-and-chocolate base), Elixir has been modernised with a vanilla infusion and woody undertones. Schafer is thrilled with the pairing. 'I was so honoured to be asked. I had walked a few shows for Casey [Cadwallader, Mugler's creative director] and then, when they told me about this opportunity and the treatment for the commercial, I was so down.'

As a longtime fashion follower, her own line might not be too far off. 'I am always looking for opportunities and want to segue into it and make it right,' she says. 'I am not sure I even have the time for a line right now,' she laughs, 'but perhaps a collaboration with someone.'

There's a relentless creative urge at play here – as a talented artist, she also expresses a desire to spend more time painting. 'I am going to get a studio and maybe do an art show. I've been reduced to my sketchbook, but I am bringing it everywhere. I miss the bigger projects that I used to work on, rather than the doodles and watercolours I do now.'

As her life speeds up, Schafer seems preoccupied with slowing things down. 'I am trying to make an effort to not get lost in the sauce of all this stuff, because you can kind of get swept up in it,' she says. She finds a sense of grounding in her relationship with actor and fellow *Euphoria* star Dominic Fike. While she isn't open to sharing all the intimate details, she describes the sense of stability the relationship has provided. 'I think we are able to be a safety net for one another. I feel like I've been learning a lot about the effort it takes to upkeep it. Because it does, you know, especially in our world. But, to me, it's deeply worth it.'

As we finish our conversation, Schafer is preparing to head to the Brooklyn Museum to see the Mugler retrospective before a quick race to JFK airport. As her suitcases are hurried to a waiting car by her team, we talk about how much can change in a relatively short amount of time. 'I still don't know how I got here,' she says, as I list off her accomplishments: prime-time actor, fashion muse and, now, future big-screen star.

While the circumstances around her may have changed, Hunter's artistic spirit remains – and, coupled with her new star power, there is no doubt she'll be a force for good in Hollywood and beyond. Not a world away from the girl I met all those years ago. ☐

THIS PAGE Dress, £880, MUGLER. OPPOSITE Jacket, £895, and skirt, £875, both SIMONE ROCHA

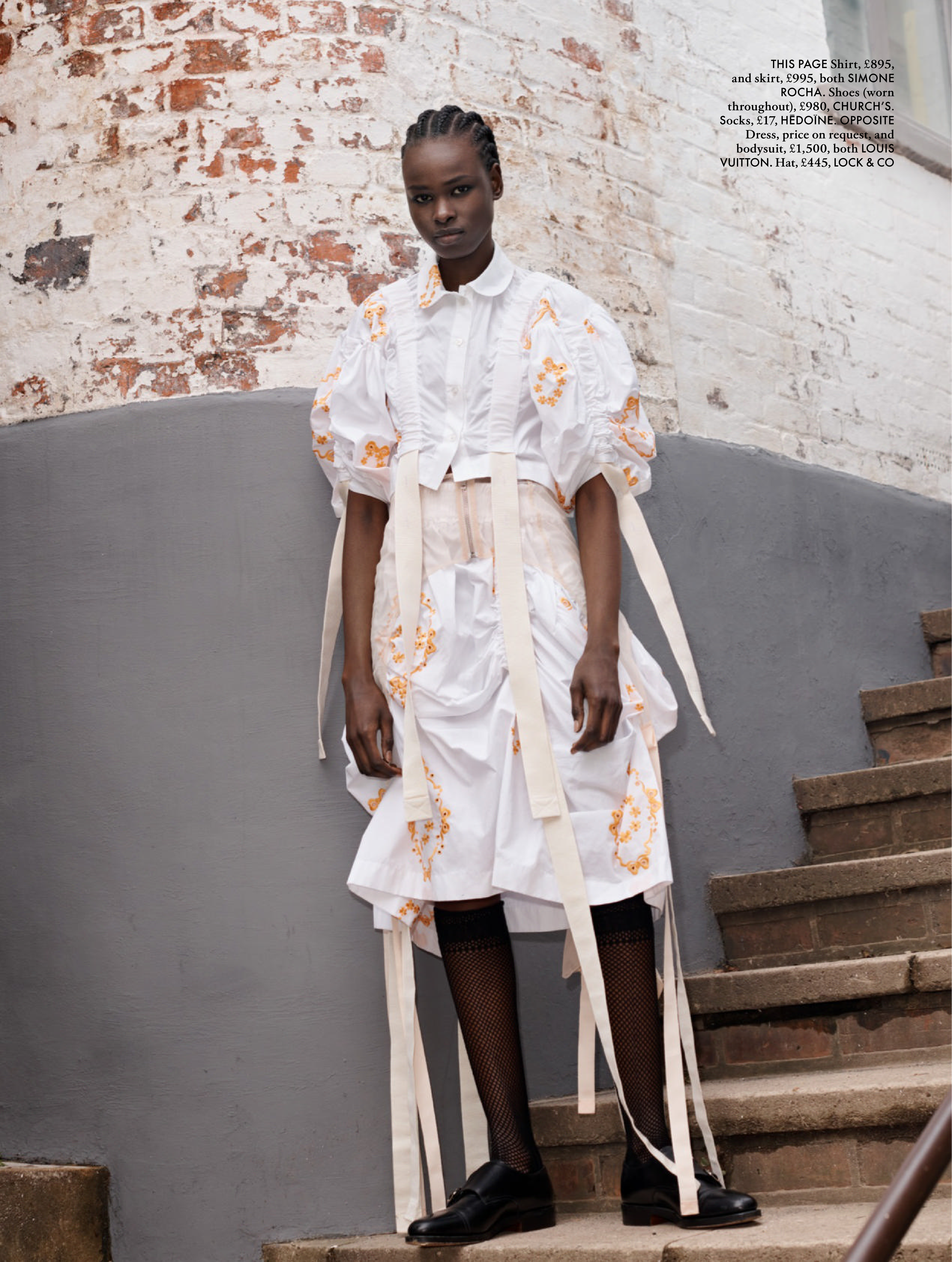
THIS PAGE Coat, £3,400, and shoes, £900, both PRADA. OPPOSITE Top, £580, MUGLER. HAIR: Lacy Redway. MAKE-UP: Carolina Dali at the Wall Group. NAILS: Casey Herman at The Wall Group. SET DESIGN: Caz Slattery at CLM. PRODUCTION: Heather Robbins and Mary Goughnour at CLM. FASHION ASSISTANTS: Grace Clarke and Alyssa Mosley

MUGLER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LIZ COLLINS STYLING BY ANNE-MARIE CURTIS

A SOFT LIFE

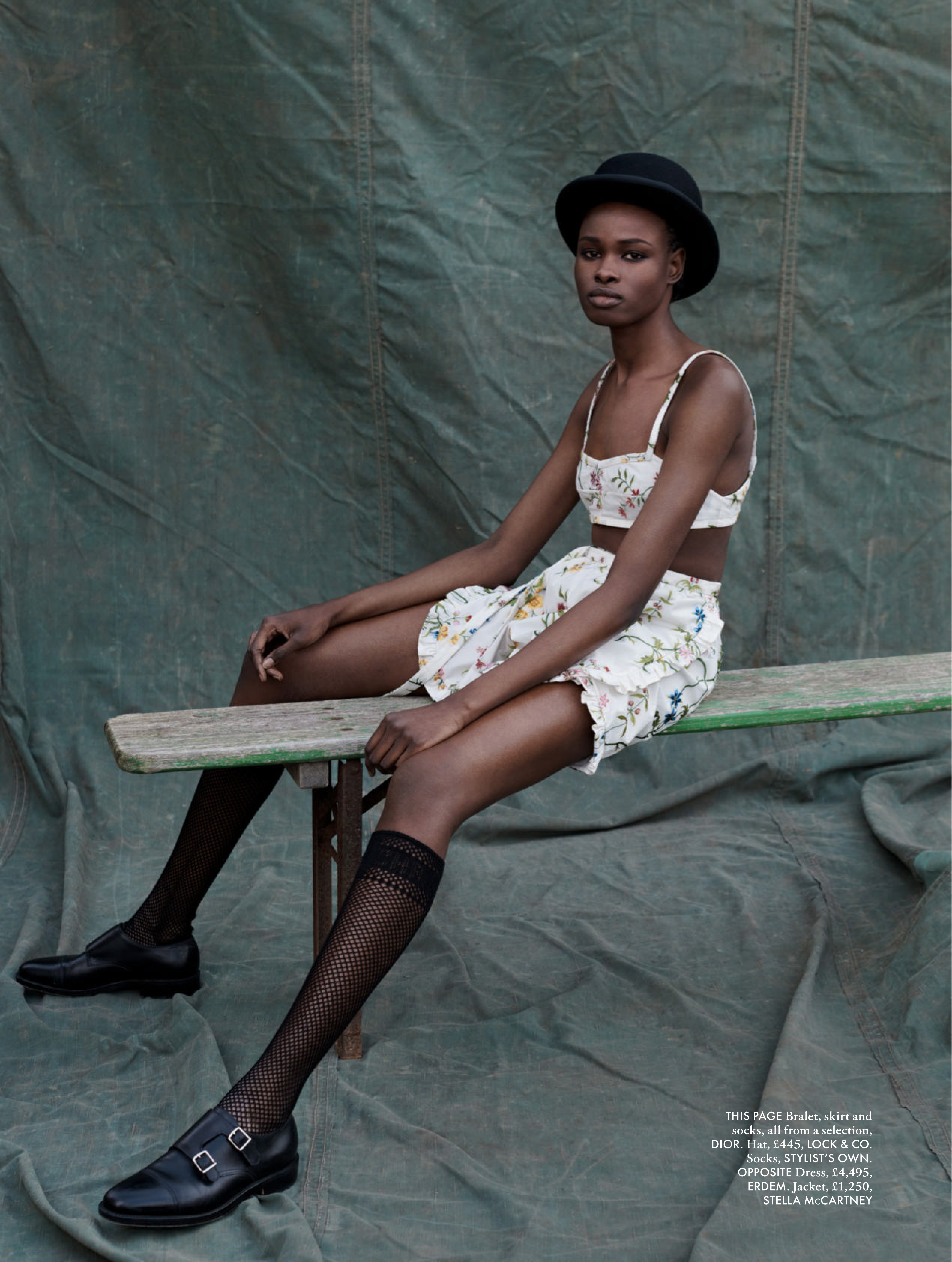
FLORALS HAVE HAD A REWORKED UPGRADE FOR THE NEW SEASON AND THE LOOK IS SOFTER, MORE FEMININE AND EASIER. TOUGHEN IT ALL UP WITH ANDROGYNOUS BROGUES AND A BLAZER, THEN GO AND ENJOY THE SPRING YOU DESERVE



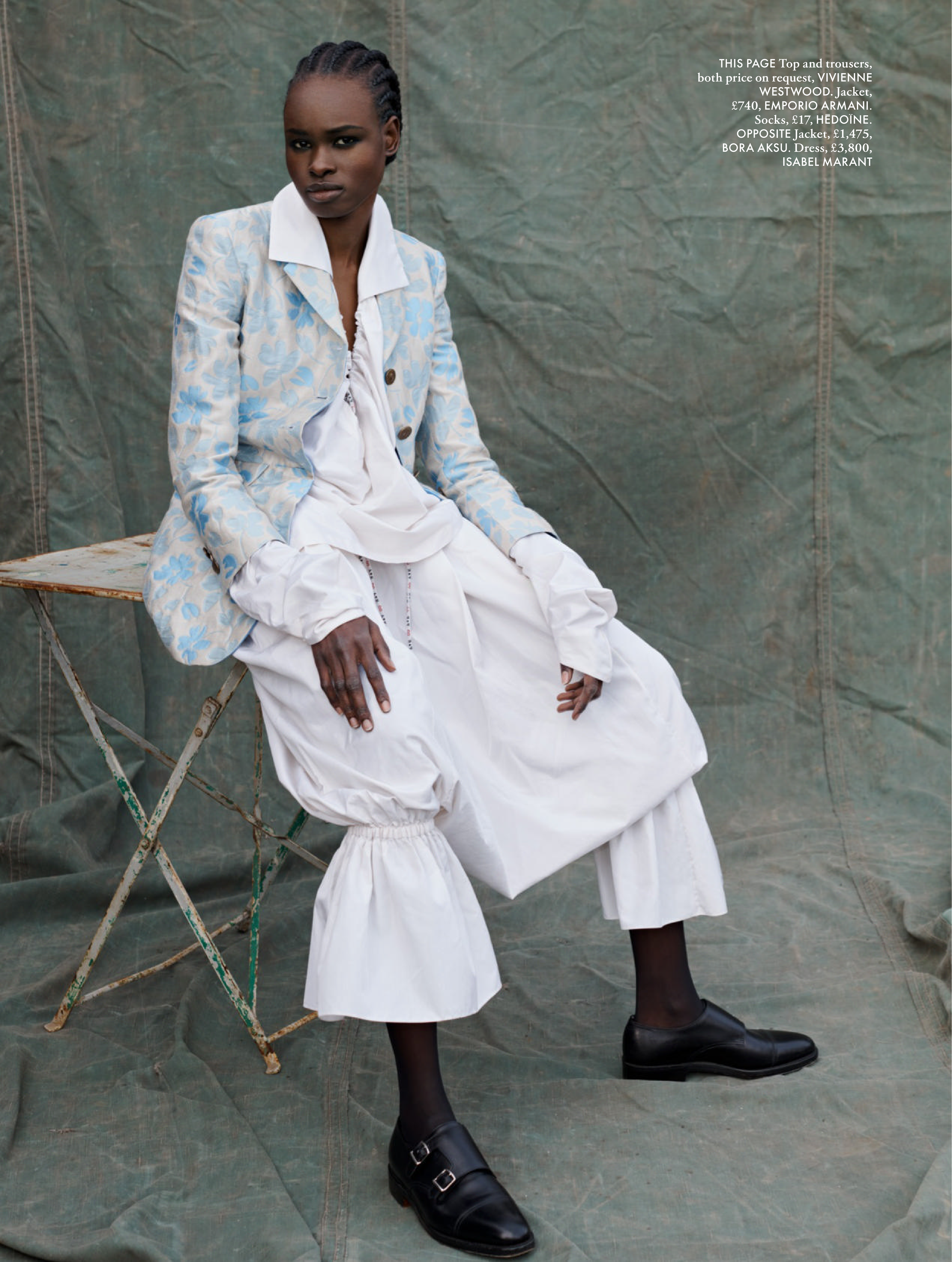
THIS PAGE Shirt, £895, and skirt, £995, both SIMONE ROCHA. Shoes (worn throughout), £980, CHURCH'S. Socks, £17, HĒDOÏNE. OPPOSITE Dress, price on request, and bodysuit, £1,500, both LOUIS VUITTON. Hat, £445, LOCK & CO

PRADA

THIS PAGE Dress (worn underneath), £603, MOLLY GODDARD. Dress (worn on top), £2,400, CELINE BY HEDI SLIMANE. Socks, £17 for two pairs, HĒDOÏNE. OPPOSITE Top, £890, and dress, £3,200, both PRADA. Hat, £135, JADE MACLAINE FOR HAWK & DOVE. Socks, £17, HĒDOÏNE

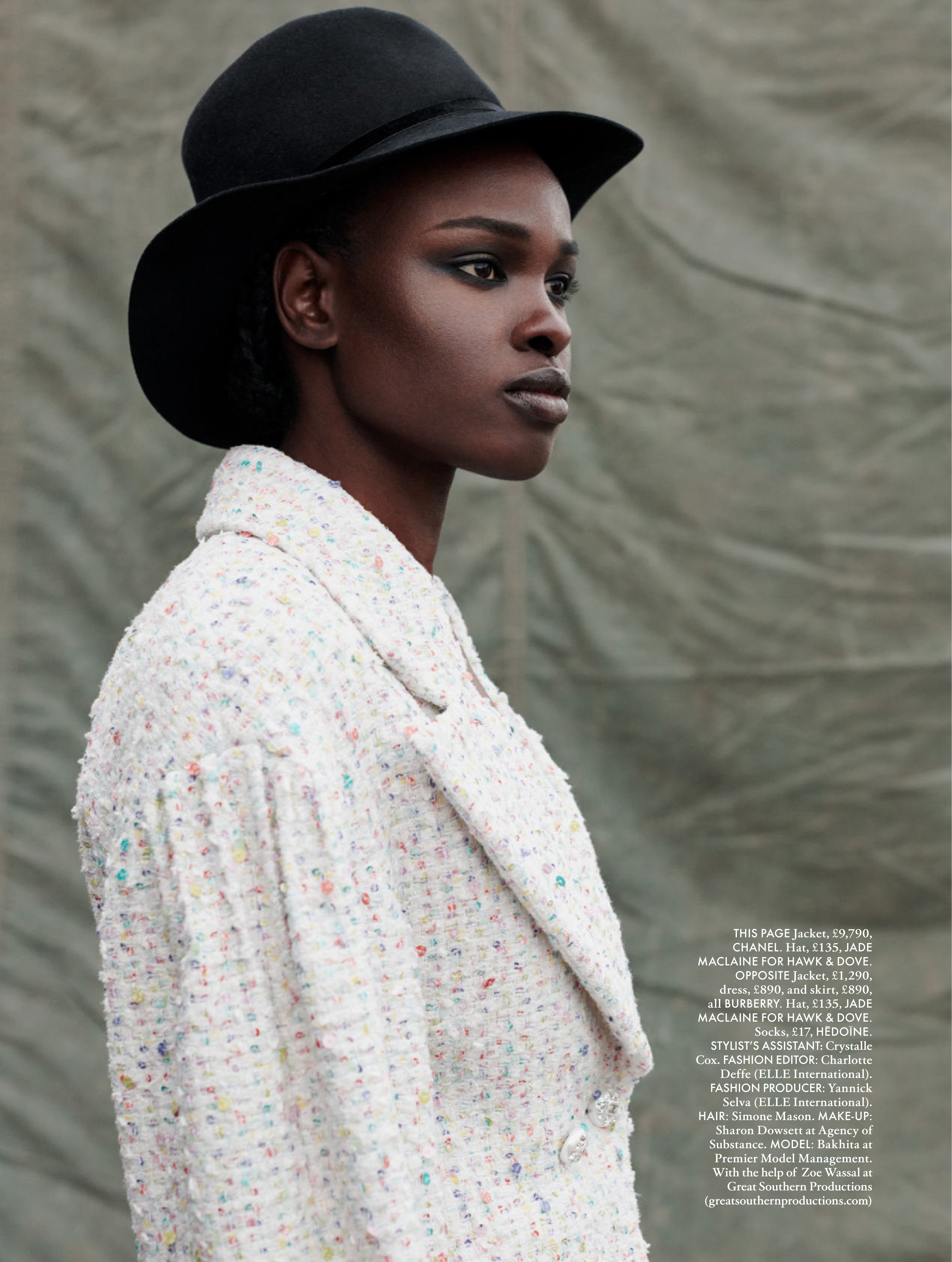


THIS PAGE Bralet, skirt and socks, all from a selection, **DIOR**. Hat, £445, **LOCK & CO.** Socks, **STYLIST'S OWN.** **OPPOSITE** Dress, £4,495, **ERDEM**. Jacket, £1,250, **STELLA McCARTNEY**



THIS PAGE Top and trousers, both price on request, VIVIENNE WESTWOOD. Jacket, £740, EMPORIO ARMANI. Socks, £17, HĒDOÏNE. OPPOSITE Jacket, £1,475, BORA AKSU. Dress, £3,800, ISABEL MARANT

THIS PAGE Dress, £4,080, GUCCI. Blazer, £1,302, MICHAEL KORS. OPPOSITE Blazer, £795, shirt, £535, and skirt, £495, all DRIES VAN NOTEN. Socks, £17, HÊDOÏNE. Hat, £445, LOCK & CO



THIS PAGE Jacket, £9,790, **CHANEL**. Hat, £135, **JADE MACLAINE FOR HAWK & DOVE**. **OPPOSITE** Jacket, £1,290, dress, £890, and skirt, £890, all **BURBERRY**. Hat, £135, **JADE MACLAINE FOR HAWK & DOVE**. Socks, £17, **HĒDOÏNE**. **STYLIST'S ASSISTANT:** Crystalle Cox. **FASHION EDITOR:** Charlotte Deffe (ELLE International). **FASHION PRODUCER:** Yannick Selva (ELLE International). **HAIR:** Simone Mason. **MAKE-UP:** Sharon Dowsett at Agency of Substance. **MODEL:** Bakhita at Premier Model Management. With the help of Zoe Wassal at Great Southern Productions (greatsouthernproductions.com)

THE PLEASURE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EKUA KING STYLING BY JENNY KENNEDY

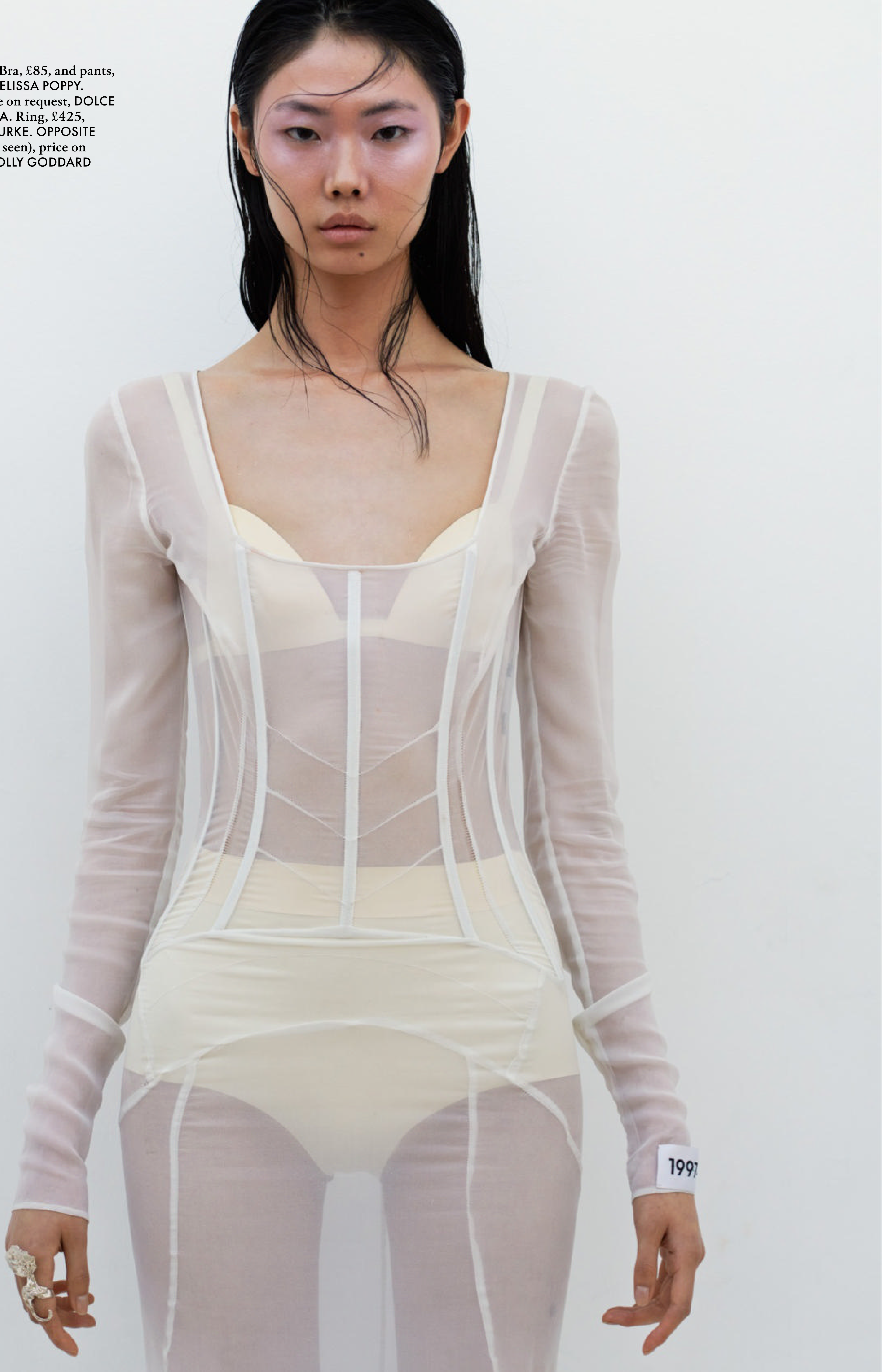
PRINCIPLE

CELEBRATE THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING WITH THE LIGHTEST, MOST GOSSAMER-LIKE PIECES IN SHIMMERY, SILVERY HUES. IT'S TIME TO SHINE

PREVIOUS PAGES Dress, £3,513, **CHLOĒ**. Earring, £375, **JOANNE BURKE**. **THIS PAGE** Dress, £6,100, and sandals, £670, both **CELINE BY HEDI SLIMANE**. Two rings on finger, £280, **ALIGHIERI**. Single ring, stylist's own

Dress, £1,975,
ACNE STUDIOS.
Ring, stylist's own

THIS PAGE Bra, £85, and pants, £115, both ELISSA POPPY. Dress, price on request, DOLCE & GABBANA. Ring, £425, JOANNE BURKE. OPPOSITE Jacket (just seen), price on request, MOLLY GODDARD



miu miu

THIS PAGE Dress with gloves, price on request, PHILOSOPHY DI LORENZO SERAFINI. OPPOSITE Top, £720, skirt, £680, shorts, £650, and bra, £750, all MIU MIU. HAIR: Yoshitaka Miyazaki, using Ghd Professional. HAIR STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: Ashley Hill. MAKE-UP: Celia Evans, using Typology Paris. NAILS: Maddy Ayers. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: Grace Clarke. CASTING: Troy Westwood. MODELS: Jay Jay Bol at Wilhelmina; and Sijia Kang at Premier

THE PLAY'S THE THING

JONATHAN ANDERSON, A DECADE AT LOEWE'S HELM, HAS ACHIEVED THE FEAT THAT ELUDES MANY MODERN DESIGNERS: LONGEVITY. MEET THE MAN HAVING SERIOUS FUN WITH FASHION, AND DELIGHTING HIS FANBASE IN THE PROCESS

PHOTOGRAPH BY CĒSAR SEGARRA
WORDS BY VĒRONIQUE HYLAND
STYLED BY ANASTASIA BARBIERI

IT WASN'T UNTIL JAMES JOYCE LEFT Ireland that he wrote *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*, classics that embed themselves in the topography of his island home. He did so, says Jonathan Anderson, 'via not being there, but meticulously being there,' tracing Dublin's streets like a palm reader delineating not the future but the past. Sometimes, Anderson says, 'you have to run away from something to appreciate it.'

Anderson himself grew up splitting his time between Northern Ireland and Ibiza. 'The great thing about an island is you want to get out,' he says. Having the Troubles as the backdrop to your childhood, 'you realise you take everything for granted. Everything can be very fragile,' he recalls now. At the same time: 'It's so beautiful. Everything is grey, so colours really pop, whereas in Ibiza you've got blue skies and everything becomes harmonious with each other.' In a Joycean turn of events, when Anderson decamped for London, he became more free to tell his own story. And storytelling, he says, is what 'fashion, ultimately, is about'.

Anderson first drew acclaim for his line JW Anderson, which won him a British Fashion Award nod as an Emerging Talent in 2012. The following year, he was tapped by LVMH to run the Spanish house of Loewe. A decade later, Anderson is a veteran by fashion standards. And, like a writer operating at the height of his powers, he is creating more fanciful, relevant and talked-about collections than ever.

Take the Loewe SS23 show, which actor Taylor Russell opened in a dress with panniers, a silhouette Anderson has been experimenting with that is meant to resemble the aerial view of a menswear jacket. The digital world crept in as well, in the form of pixelated video-game looks. So did nature, symbolised by anthurium blooms, as alluring as they are poisonous. (The collection spoke to, 'our two dilemmas,' he says. 'How do we deal with technology, and how do we deal with the environment?') He liked the idea of starting with something romantic, 'and then suddenly, "Bam!" There's a glitch.' It wasn't necessarily what people were expecting, but it turned out to be what they wanted. His clothes, says his friend and collaborator, the model and actor Hari Nef, 'anticipate an appetite.' ▷

Bernard Leach THE POTTER'S CHALLENGE
The Leach Legacy St Ives Pottery and its influence Marion Whybrow
LEACH POTTERY ST IVES MARION WHYBROW
Sotheby's
British Studio Ceramics

JONATHAN
ANDERSON IN
HIS OFFICE

Despite the pressure to reinvent the wheel every season, his collections often feel like chapters in a series – a JW cinematic universe of sorts. In Loewe's AW22 collection, dresses and shoes came ornamented with faux balloons that appeared semi-inflated; for SS23, they were both real and deflated, resembling crushed petals. 'I think it depends what mood I'm in or how bored I'm getting,' he says of these motifs. 'Sometimes I get bored very quickly; sometimes I'm like, "Oh, I'm not done with this process yet."' He admires Issey Miyake and Rei Kawakubo, who worked long enough to have distinct eras, à la Picasso's Blue Period. And he mentions the Irish painter Paul Henry, who restricted himself to only painting cloudscapes and landscapes. 'There's something I love about that. I wish I could only put out one thing.'

> 'LOEWE HAS A VERY IMPORTANT HISTORY, BUT AT THE SAME TIME IT NEEDS TO BE CURRENT'

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: LOOKS FROM LOEWE SS23

Anderson is unabashedly intellectual, referencing not just Joyce but the poet Seamus Heaney (Anderson's one-time neighbour), artist Paul Thek and ceramicist Lucie Rie, practically in one breath. 'Jonathan is not an ivory-tower, tortured-creative couturier with nothing but a dress form and a pair of scissors,' Nef says. 'Jonathan is a cultural omnivore. He watches everything. He goes to every exhibition. He reads everything. He's constantly metabolising everything he finds cool: art; television; fashion, both contemporary and archival; books; films. And he makes them into clothes.'

Despite the high-minded references, Anderson's work is always full of playfulness. 'I can over-intellectualise things, but at the same time, there is nothing better than good comedy,' he says. During the height of the pandemic, he began experimenting with play in a more literal sense, creating a hyper-analogue 'show in a box' for SS21. 'I'm the kind of person who will not stop unless the world is stopping, unfortunately,' he reflects. '[The pandemic] made me feel young again somehow. I felt like I had lost all inhibition. I didn't care what the industry thought anymore, what journalists or students thought of what I was doing, because I felt like everything could have gone [away] anyway.' Pre-2020, 'I was a bit more closed as a designer. Probably more difficult, maybe. The pandemic helped me reconnect to myself and why I do this job.'

Even when he's referencing video games, there's a purity to Anderson's work that feels opposed to contemporary fashion's postmodern, Easter egg-strewn, viral-at-any-cost mania. His perspective seems unmediated by the endless scroll of social feeds. As he unspools his allusions, I find myself thinking how few thirtysomething designers would be so eager to talk about James Joyce or curate exhibits of Henry Moore sculptures. Anderson seems to be striving for modernism, living by the 'Make It New' edict that something wholly distinct can be created out of nothing.

When he talks about Miyake – the two shared a correspondence but never met – Anderson points out he was not a showman. The clothing was always the main attraction. Today, 'we are more interested in the overall bombast of

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF LOEWE

something, which can be a problem,' he says. 'We're starting to see a crumbling of things that we held up so highly but, ultimately, what do we do with it? Because media is going so fast; the consumer is digesting and spitting it out. They will build it up and break it. I think this is why continuity is becoming more and more important. And, actually, there is nothing more exciting than the low profile-ness of something.'

Anderson takes continuity seriously. When he joined Loewe nearly 10 years ago, he took a year, 'to work out how [someone of] my generation would tackle redoing a brand about classicism, about making, and less about trend,' he says. He was drawn to its timeless quality, he says. 'We could do fun and wild things that get picked up, but what I set out to do was build a foundation. Loewe has a very important history that needs to be protected, but at the same time needs to be current.' His namesake line, as he sees it, 'agitates culture, whereas Loewe is about solidifying it, somehow.'

One thing he did to fuse past and present was establish the Loewe Foundation Craft Prize in 2016, anticipating fashion's return to craft by a few years. Anderson has also made it a point to collaborate with artisans, most recently as part of the exhibit *Weave, Restore and Renew* at the Salone del Mobile in Milan, which showcased the work of Spanish and Korean artisans. Without craftspeople, 'it would be harder for me to create, because I need the sounding board of, "Oh, you can do that." Or, "Wow, I never thought of it that way",' he says. 'It is a great way to escape from fashion, to get outside of the bubble of it.'

Another Anderson design trademark has been gender fluidity. His namesake line, 'started off with this idea of a shared wardrobe. I was doing it when no one was talking about it,' he says. 'Five years later, it was a trend.' He once found himself in a drag bar in Boston with Nef, who told him how important seeing the collections on the now-defunct Style.com was to her as a fashion-obsessed teen. Those early shows, Nef tells me, 'felt so electric and unprecedented, even through a screen'. Particularly the JW Anderson AW13 menswear show, which featured frilly boots and tunics in corporate grey wool: 'I'd never seen clothes that had this vocabulary before, that frankly were existing in an in-between place in terms of menswear or womenswear. It really conked me over the head in terms of how it was possible to dress.'

Anderson will soon be taking on another title – that of costume designer. He's collaborating with his friend Luca Guadagnino, the Italian director of *Call Me by Your Name*, on the upcoming film *Challengers*, starring Zendaya. Set in the recent past, 'it's not theatrical at all, which was actually really challenging, because you are trying to make something look as real as possible,' he says. 'I wouldn't do this for anyone else bar Luca. But I really enjoyed it. It made me appreciate every costume designer in film.'

Of course, that's on top of doing more than 13 collections a year. I ask him how he staves off burn-out. 'You always think you're going to burn out. Every time I do a collection, I feel like I'm about to lose everything,' he says. 'I think that's how you prevent it: by thinking you could lose everything. Every time, I feel like, "Are we going to lose momentum? Are we going to lose the audience?" Because fashion is fleeting, ultimately. We love brands for a certain period of time. I'm quite surprised we still have the support. Maybe I've gotten better with age.'

Fittingly, when we speak, he's planning a visit back to where it all began: the land of green and grey where, he says, you never leave empty-handed. 'I will probably leave with a suitcase of food. It's as if my parents are worried I'm going to go starving,' he says, adding, in the understatement of the year, 'even though I'm doing quite well on my own.' ☐

LESS IS MORE

WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE SO-CALLED GREAT SEX RECESSION, A WAVE OF ZILLENNIALS IS GROWING BORED WITH THE CASUAL HOOK-UP CULTURE THAT DOMINATED PRE-PANDEMIC TIMES – AND REWRITING THE RULES OF INTIMACY

WORDS BY KATIE O'MALLEY
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARIANA MOLTONI

'A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO OPERATE BY HER CONVICTIONS should never be questioned, especially when it comes to sex,' Pennsylvania-based lawyer Fumi Ekhator, 32, is saying. She's been celibate for five years and tells me it's brought her greater romantic satisfaction, not less. 'The glorification of hook-up culture is often little more than a facade,' she says. 'Dating while celibate gave me the freedom to be free from expectations and with a mindset focused on finding a bond built on genuine friendship. We are so much more than our bodies.'

At a time when hook-ups are available at the swipe of a screen, you'd expect that we'd be having more of them than ever. But Ekhator is one of countless young women who have chosen to turn away from sex either largely or altogether.

Barely a month seems to go by without a headline declaring that Gen Z are stuck in a 'sex recession'. Studies show that, across the UK and US, Gen Z (those born between 1996 and 2012) are more concerned about tightening their belts rather than undoing them. One, from 2017, found that just 24% of people aged between 18 and 23 said they were having casual sex, compared to 38% in 2007. In another, 31% of young single women reported having sexual intercourse during the past month in 2007, versus 22% in 2017.

Gen Z is experiencing a distinctly different kind of sexual revolution from previous generations such as millennials or Generation X (1965-1979); it's one where the approach to sex is more pragmatic and personal.

Scott South, a professor of sociology at the University of Albany in New York, says the stats showing a sex famine have caught many researchers 'by surprise'. 'While there has been a good deal of speculation as to why people were having less sex, there are few rigorous studies testing these explanations,' he says. Following their 2021 study *Why Are Fewer Young Adults Having Casual Sex?*, South and his co-researcher Lei Lei, the Dean of Rutgers Business School, found that waning alcohol consumption plays a 'substantial' factor, as does the ▷

decreasing frequency of informal dating relationships and increasing economic precarity.

There are also the factors more likely to be revealed in anecdotes than data: a backlash against hook-up culture, changes in people's approach to intimacy post-pandemic (decreased sexual desire, irritation at less privacy, tiredness from feeling overworked), and even helicopter parents. And let's not forget the ubiquity of porn, which has skewed the expectations of sex, resulting in disappointment and disillusionment when the 'real thing' can't compete with its fictional other.

Sex might be more readily available than ever before, but our appetite for it appears to have swung to its limit on the pendulum. Has the abundance of it made it boring? Or has the casual attitude towards it (think ad-hoc Tinder matches, d*ck pics and subsequent ghosting) made us question what we really want from intimacy, and feel more empowered to remove ourselves from situations that don't satisfy those needs?

Modern society owes a lot of its perception of sex to the sexual-liberation movement of the 1960s. It gave rise to the normalisation of contraception, pornography, premarital sex and masturbation. It helped to legalise homosexuality and abortion. It also portrayed sex, especially casual sex, as both a means of and an indication of female empowerment. Many of those ideas persist to the present day, after the Jilly Cooper 'bonkbusters' of the 1980s and the popularity of 1990s TV shows like *Sex and the City* and *Ally McBeal*, which portrayed intelligent female thirtysomethings enjoying no-strings-attached sex. But the realities of hook-up culture – which has grown exponentially in recent years thanks to dating apps – and the complex issues that can be involved in it have left many people, especially women, feeling anything but empowered.

Over the past two decades, millennials and Gen Z have been picking apart previous generations' understanding of physical intimacy to work out what it should look like in a digital, consent-focused world. And while sex education was made compulsory in all British secondary schools in 2017 (covering everything from sexual orientation to the definitions of rape), today's sex-curious are primarily being educated by podcasts, wellness apps and TV shows such as *Sex Education*, *Fleabag* and *Big Mouth*, where protagonists address modern sexuality in a way that's honest, relatable and realistic.

> 'WE ARE TAKING CONTROL OF OUR PLEASURE. EVERYONE GETS TO DECIDE HOW THEY SEE SEX'

According to sex educator and *F**ks Given* podcast host Reed Amber, it's this improved exposure to, and availability of, conversations about sex, gender and sexual identities that is behind the younger generation's new attitude. 'Women are learning more about their bodies and know they don't need to get the same amount of validation from sex as perhaps they once did… We are taking more control and responsibility for our pleasure and waiting for the right thing to come along, rather than f*cking anything that moves. Everyone now gets to decide the way they see sex and their bodies, rather than having someone else decide it for them,' she says.

Some Gen Z-ers – who have been dubbed 'puriteens', a phrase used to describe young 'sex-negative' digital nomads – are going one step further and taking sex off the menu altogether. The hashtag #celibacy has been viewed over 165 million

NO THANKS!

WHETHER IT'S PREPARING FOR ACTING ROLES OR IN ORDER TO FEEL CLOSER TO GOD, THESE ARE THE CELEBRITIES WHO HAVE ADVOCATED CELIBACY

DREW BARRYMORE
THE ACTOR AND TALK-SHOW HOST REVEALED IN AN ESSAY THAT SHE HADN'T HAD SEX SINCE HER DIVORCE SIX YEARS BEFORE. 'I'M NOT A PERSON WHO NEEDS SEX,' SHE WROTE.

LIL YACHTY
IN A RECENT PODCAST INTERVIEW, THE US RAPPER SAID SEX DOESN'T DO IT FOR HIM ANYMORE: 'I JUST HAD SO MUCH SEX THAT IT'S, LIKE, DILUTED TO ME.'

AMBER ROSE
THE MODEL RECENTLY DECLARED ON A PODCAST THAT SHE WAS FINE WITH BEING SINGLE FOR THE REST OF HER LIFE: 'I DON'T WANT TO HAVE SEX… IT'S SO GROSS. I DON'T WANT IT'

times on TikTok, with one user deciding to go celibate for a year to 'reclaim' her sexual energy. Another wants to break his 'soul ties' (a spiritual connection between two people that some believe forms after sex), for a 'healthier soul'. Sexual abstinence is being used as a way for them to reconnect with themselves and disconnect from the social pressures around physical intimacy.

Life coach Victoria de Vall, 24, became celibate in 2020 after feeling 'unsafe' in the way that she viewed herself and male sexual partners. 'I'd come to realise I didn't know what intimacy looked like,' she says. 'I had been conditioned to perform and go along with whatever a boyfriend wanted, to self-abandon and people please.' Just as addiction recovery and therapy programmes often encourage individuals to embark on abstinence in order to go back to basics, de Vall says not having sex for a period of time enabled her to do 'inner transformation work' and reconnect with her own sexual desire. 'You have to "starve" yourself of another person's validation and [stop] using sex to avoid your emotions,' she says.

A period of abstinence is part of the framework co-founders Dr Anna Hushlak and Billie Quinlan use in Ferly, an app launched in 2019 that aims to change society's relationship with sex and support women who experience 'sexual difficulties', such as low libido and the inability to orgasm. 'It takes the pressure off,' Dr Hushlak explains, 'and also allows people to redefine what sex actually means to them.'

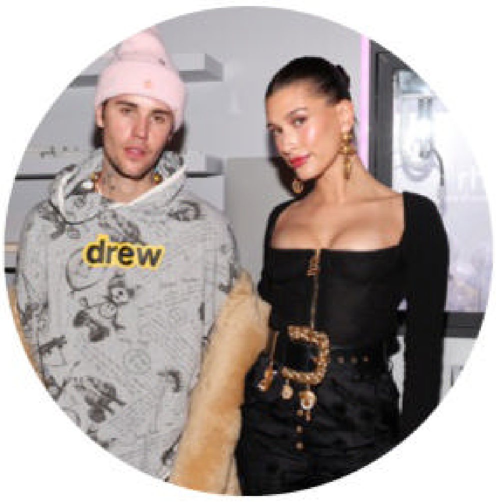
SEXUAL ABSTINENCE IS BEING USED AS A WAY FOR PEOPLE TO RECONNECT WITH THEMSELVES

The idea that sex starts with oneself is of utmost importance for Dr Hushlak and Quinlan, who have both experienced sexual abuse. 'I had the hands of other people know my body before I even knew myself,' Dr Hushlak says. In a world in which you can get a hook-up faster than you can a takeaway, it's crucial for people to eradicate the notion that the frequency of sex is a measure of how good it is. 'As a society, we're obsessed with the quantity of sex rather than the quality. Among the younger generation, it seems there's an emphasis on quality – rather than having sh*t sex, they'd rather not have it at all.'

For de Vall, the power of 'new celibacy' largely comes down to how individuals choose to define it. She says it's not about depriving yourself of pleasure, but focusing on opening yourself to the exploration of wider understandings of sex and identity. 'I'm extremely pro-sex,' she says. 'Masturbation plays a big role in the celibacy I've experienced and that I teach my clients.' Dr Hushlak agrees: 'When I think about celibacy, I tend to think about [refraining from] sex with others, as opposed to refraining from sex entirely,' she says.

We live in a time of apparent contradictions: waning interest in intimacy that doesn't serve us, but increasing acceptance that everyone should be free to express their sexuality as they want. The queer umbrella is continuing to expand and Gen Z are gaining distance from obsolete expectations of what sex 'should' look like. They're able to own their sexual identities in a way that has never been done before. The repercussions of the younger generation's sex 'drought' remains to be seen. But there's more than enough reason to believe the kids are alright. Perhaps a little more abstinence, when used to prioritise one's own desires, might not be such a bad thing. ☐

JULIA FOX
THE ACTOR TOLD *ELLE* SHE HASN'T HAD SEX IN MONTHS: 'I WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE… LIKE, DON'T TALK TO ME, DON'T LOOK AT ME, DON'T BOTHER ME.'



JUSTIN BIEBER
BEFORE MARRYING HIS NOW-WIFE HAILEY, THE SINGER SAID THAT HE'D HAD A SELF-IMPOSED PERIOD OF NO SEX AS A WAY OF FEELING CLOSER TO GOD.

ANDREW GARFIELD
IN ORDER TO PLAY A JESUIT PRIEST IN MARTIN SCORSESE'S 2016 FILM *SILENCE*, THE METHOD ACTOR STARVED HIMSELF OF SEX AND FOOD. 'I WAS CELIBATE FOR SIX MONTHS,' HE SAID.

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, BACKGRID

SHE WHO DARES

ONCE STAID, PARENT-PLEASING AFFAIRS, WEDDINGS HAVE BECOME CULT FASHION EVENTS AS BRIDES PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF HOW THE BIG DAY CAN LOOK. HERE, THREE DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT AND STYLISH WOMEN OPEN UP ABOUT THE NEW WAYS TO GET MARRIED IN 2023, FROM THE VENUE AND FOOD TO, YES, THE DRESS

WORDS BY ENI SUBAIR AND KATIE O'MALLEY

AFTER LOCKDOWN-ERA ZOOM WEDDINGS AND STRICTLY LIMITED guestlists, statement bridalwear (and the guests to admire it) are back with a bang. Women are making up for lost time with extravagant celebrations and directional dresses – and the more looks, the better.

Alongside established brands launching bridalwear – including Molly Goddard, 16Arlington, Erdem and, new for this summer, The Vampire's Wife – there's a slew of emerging young designers specialising in big-day dressing. London-based Wed launched in 2019 and has become a go-to among the fashion crowd, while the capital's Chet Lo has dabbled in making wow-worthy pieces for brides-to-be. Meanwhile, New York designer Sandy Liang added roomy, knee-skimming dresses to her roster last summer as part of a bridal capsule collection, and says that 'women want pieces that feel more personal, that might not follow the traditional silhouettes we typically see, and that are comfortable – something they can eat in and dance the night away in carefree.'

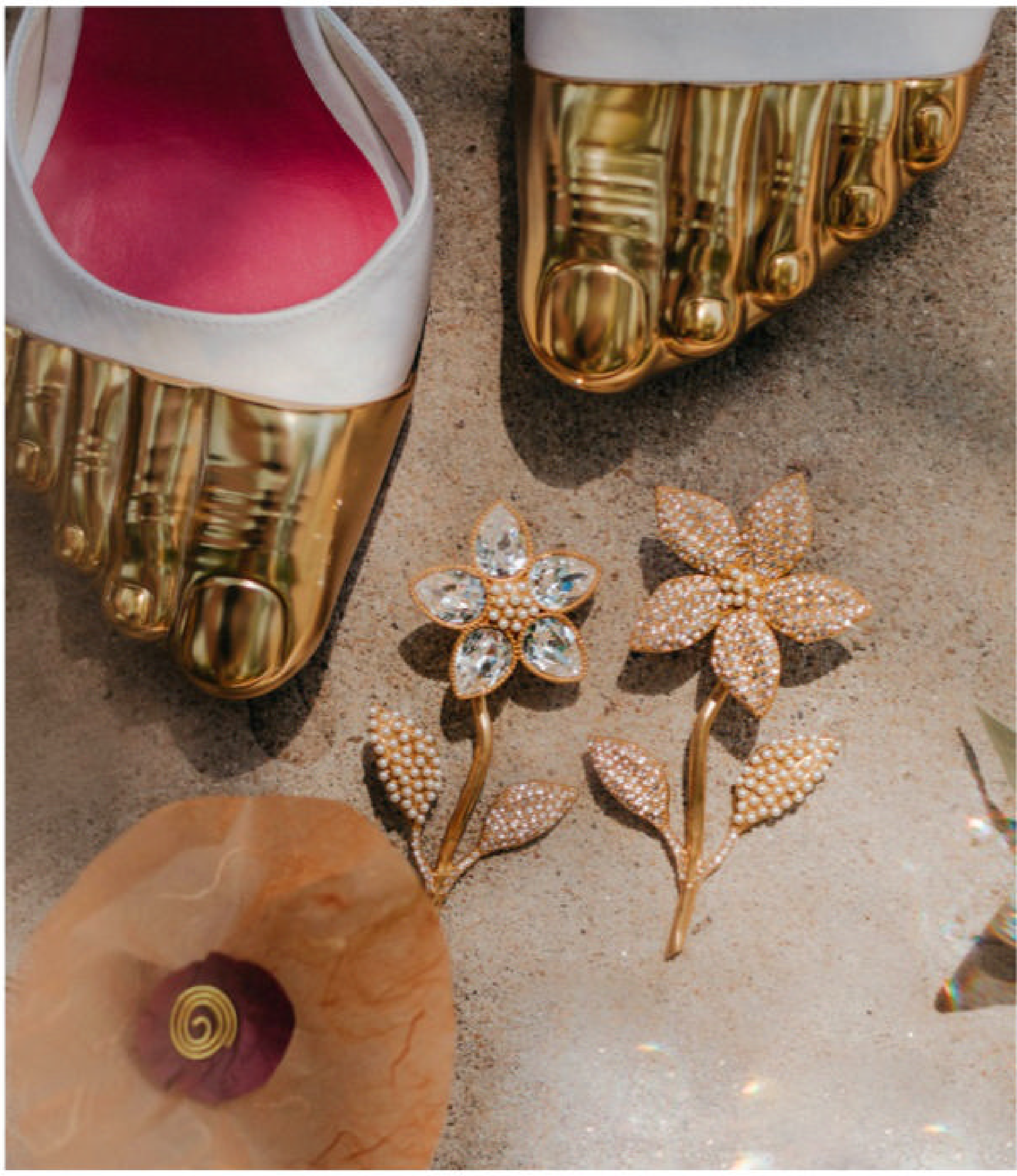
What connects them all is a desire for looks that showcase their style, personality and heritage. Here, three women reveal what made them say yes to the dress.

SOMETHING CUSTOM
LIZ FOX ROSEBERRY, ARTIST

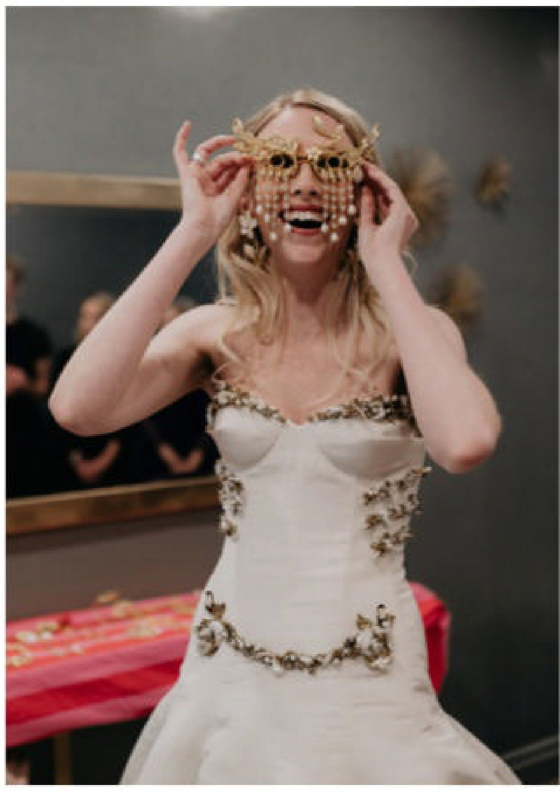
You may not believe it, but the thought of asking my brother Daniel [creative director of Schiaparelli] to make my wedding dress never even crossed my mind. He's always just been my badass brother first and foremost. But when I called to tell him the good news he said I should let him know when I'd like him to make my wedding dress. I felt incredibly thankful. But as the pandemic began we parked all wedding planning. Then, at the end of 2021, we started thinking…

I didn't want to stifle Daniel's vision in any way, but he was very insistent on my input: he wanted the dress to be tailored to me. Even if you don't dream about your own wedding dress, there's something objectively beautiful about them. I've long admired bodices and corsets, so I wanted those elements incorporated. During 2020, I took up dancing as a hobby and a form of exercise, so being able to dance in my dress was important. And I knew I wanted it to be non-traditional. I'd never worn anything strapless, but Daniel assured me it would be the perfect fit, which it was. I sent him a playlist of potential songs I'd like to walk down the aisle to and silhouettes of dresses I loved to give him a general vibe of the wedding. We grew up on Audrey Hepburn movies such as *Funny Face*, and the adorable pouffy gown that cuts off around her ankles was a part of the inspiration. In return, he sent me various sketches that were almost impossible to choose from. I went with my gut for one that really stood out, with embroidery and bijoux along the top of the corset.

A month or two before the wedding, I hadn't even seen pictures of the dress. Then Daniel asked me if I'd like to come to the Schiaparelli house in Paris and try it on. I never imagined that would even be an option but seeing it in person for the first time was so beautiful. It was very surreal; the reaction from the artisans in the house was so generous.



When my dress arrived at my home the Wednesday before my wedding day, it was in the biggest box I've ever seen in my life. The wedding date was stitched onto the dress cover and 'Zeebo', the name Daniel calls me, was embroidered onto the back of the dress. The idea of including crazy accessories appealed to me and I had raised the idea with Daniel, though I never followed up. But opening the box, there was a pair of incredible gold-rendered glasses, shoes with gold-dipped toes and earrings – they were all a surprise.



Something not many people knew about the dress is that there was a custom pocket included, to fit a family heirloom. We have a small 200-year-old purse with clippings inside from all the women in my family's wedding dresses. My uncle keeps it, and he gives it to each woman in the family when they walk down the aisle – it's our 'something old'. So I carried that with me on the day.

The hardest part about planning the wedding was trying not to go too overboard. Michael, my now-husband, and I were planning on getting married at one of our favourite bars. But the moment Daniel and I started planning my dress, we realised that such an incredible look needs a bigger venue, which ended up being a place called Hummingbird House, outside of ▷

PHOTOGRAPHS: BECCA NEBLOCK

Austin, Texas. We had 15 themes and a magician at the wedding, I made paper flowers, and the women in my family wore black. Michael and I saw each other moments before the actual ceremony, and I'm so glad that we did; I was more nervous than I thought I'd be. His eyes welled up with tears. We're both goofy by nature, so I had fun showing him my shoes and the little meaningful elements of my wedding outfit.

When people say that weddings fly by, they're so right. For the evening reception, I had my two oldest brothers, Jed and Randy, lift me out of the gown. Everyone did a double take when they saw me in this short cocktail dress. After the reception, we held an after-party at a dive bar, and I changed into white lace-up Dr Martens boots.

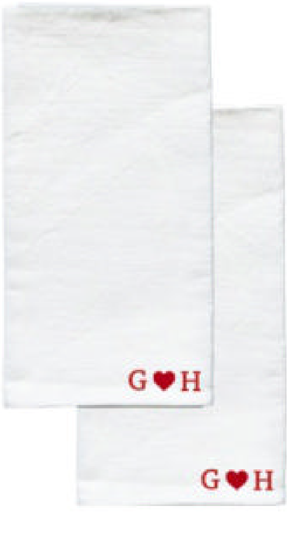
Not long after the big day, Daniel asked me if it would be OK if the dress could be hung in the Louvre as part of the *Shocking! The Surreal World of Elsa Schiaparelli* exhibition. My instant reaction was, 'I can't believe there's more to come from this amazing day!' I was able to go back to Paris just before Christmas last year and see the exhibition. I looked around and spotted it; someone walked past and I whispered, 'Hey, guess what? That's my wedding dress!' and we had a little laugh about it.

THE MODERN TOUCH

Whether it's a pre-wedding pub quiz and vitamin IV drips à la journalist Tish Weinstock, or using deadstock fabric for a Savannah Miller gown like model and slow-living advocate Danielle Copperman, 2023 brides are all about the personal details.

THE FASHION

Bridal accessories are big for 2023. 'As soon as I saw Nicola Peltz's ceremony look, I knew gloves would be a trend this year,' says Annelise Sealy, founder of the Fall Bride, who suggests adding detachable bows and voluminous sleeves to 2023 looks.



THE GUESTLIST

Wedding guests need VIP status if they're to make the cut. 'We'll see a rise in smaller weddings in 2023. Invite people you can see yourself still being friends with in 10 years,' says bridal boutique Gigi & Olive founder Georgie Le Roux.

SOMETHING PERSONAL

DAISY HOPPEN, FASHION PR

The three dresses I wore over the weekend of my wedding each represented a different aspect of my personality. The first, a cornflower-blue Molly Goddard dress that I wore to the pre-wedding pub dinner, was the party dress I've always wanted. It was made for dancing. The second, a lace Simone Rocha dress for the wedding itself, made me feel beautiful, timeless and gothic. It suited my witchy style. Lastly, The Vampire's Wife dress that I changed into for the reception was fun, frivolous and delicate; I felt like a sexy version of myself.

Thanks to my job, running my own fashion PR agency, I'm

lucky that I have relationships with these incredible designers, who are all clients and who I trust implicitly. When I was thinking about my wedding outfit, I let Simone, who I've known since we were five years old, take the reins and said, 'Whatever you think.' There wasn't any kind of moodboard; the one inspiration is that we both love ballet, *Giselle* in particular. To be honest, I never thought I would get married or have a fairytale wedding, so I had no real references to consider. I ended up going with a dress style that I would have also picked to wear 10 years ago: I liked that it was very classic.

On the Friday night before the wedding, we had a dinner at a pub in north London and I wore the blue Molly dress: I've always loved her use of colour. On one of the many occasions I visited her studio she persuaded me to try some of the dresses that were slightly larger and more voluminous, but I knew I would feel self-conscious. However, I did know that I wanted something more playful that I could wear again – which I did, to last year's Fashion Awards. For the wedding reception, which was held at Two Temple Place on the Thames, Susie Cave designed an almost Disney-like dress for me. She just knows a woman's body more than anyone else and she makes the naughtiest of naughty short dresses. And the beauty of The Vampire's Wife is, when you have a dress that fits you, you can wear it forever. Budget and being able to wear the dress again were important factors: rather than a Pinterest board, I had a budget spreadsheet.

As it was a winter wedding, I had researched coats and stumbled across a picture of Jackie Kennedy in this adorable white boiled-wool coat with a little fur hood, which Hannah Weiland of Shrimps reimagined for me.

On the day itself, I was a nervous wreck. The idea of walking down an aisle terrified me. So much so that I got my husband's name wrong four times during the ceremony – he has a lot of middle names! When we got into the wedding car after the service, he couldn't stop smiling and telling me how much he loved my dress.

The day, for me, was all about community and trusting those around me. Nostalgia, comfort and creating a quintessentially British feel were important too, especially for my husband's family travelling in from France. I wanted to be able to look back on it in 50 years and have fond memories.

There were a lot of kissing pictures taken on my wedding day. The French guests from my husband's side said they weren't used to attending weddings where the groom was always kissing his wife. I love the fact that it was unfiltered.

THE PHOTOS

Instead of traditional photo albums and framed prints, try a coffee-table book of your wedding snaps. 'Then you can flick through it like you would your favourite magazine,' say Majo & Xav, the photographers behind La Dichosa. Check out Milk Books, Printworks Market and Rosemood's designs.

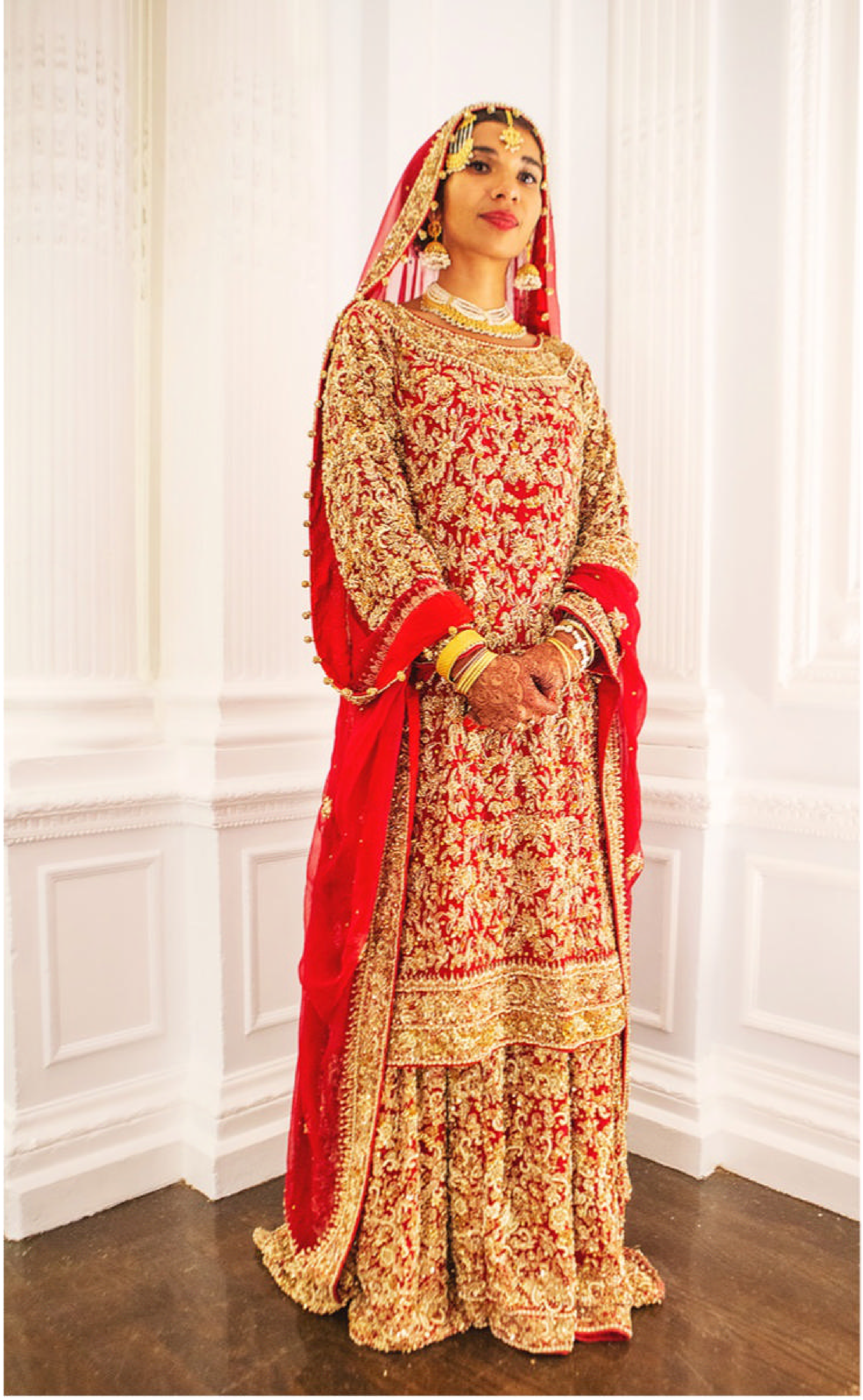
THE MENU

Like Daisy Hoppen's trolleys of French fries, 2023 weddings will be about feasting without formality. 'Serve everything family style,' suggests Rochelle Canteen chef and Hoppen's wedding caterer Margot Henderson. 'Food looks lovely on platters and it brings everyone together as they pass it around and get to know each other.'

THE DRINKS

Make drinks more a part of the experience. Salvatore Calabrese, the master behind the Dukes Martini and London's new Velvet bar, suggests serving cocktails from punch bowls in 1950s coupes, and martini cocktails poured from ice sculptures. 'It's the "wow" factor that makes a showcase of the special moment,' he says. ▷

PHOTOGRAPHS: EMILIE WHITE, CHRIS LENSZ, GETTY IMAGES



SOMETHING TRADITIONAL

NABIHAH IQBAL, MUSICIAN

As a Pakistani woman, I was adamant about wearing full Pakistani-style bridal outfits. After my boyfriend [the designer Nicholas Daley] proposed, I went to Lahore and started doing some wedding research. I'd never really thought much about getting married but once I started planning it I had a clear idea of what I wanted to wear and create, without much input from anybody else. My mum says that since the age of two I've always been really demanding about the clothes I wanted to wear, so unsurprisingly it was the same with choosing my wedding outfits. The biggest inspiration was my mum's, and seeing her bridal photographs from the 1980s. The images of her stuck in my mind: I loved the colours, the trims and the bright, bold jewellery.

I grew up in Regent's Park in central London, which isn't a very Asian area, so I didn't have many references when it came to Asian weddings. In hindsight, perhaps it was good as it meant Nicholas and I weren't comparing ourselves to anyone else. But one thing I knew was that I wanted to follow a traditional route, from the colours to the henna and the jewellery, as those classic elements are the most beautiful to me. When I was in Pakistan, I began thinking about having my bridal outfits custom-made there, in the home of such a rich, deep and ancient tradition of textiles. In the end, I decided on a silk, scarlet-red *sharara* [a long skirt with a huge circumference once stretched out] paired with a long *kameez* shirt, which were both made in Pakistan. I designed them, sourced the silk fabric and then commissioned bridal-wear tailors and embroiderers to create them. In total, the process was a four-month-long journey, and I had to be patient. There were lots of WhatsApp messages and voice notes with progress updates; in turn, I sent photos from the day so they could see the finished product in all its glory.

Three days before the wedding, which was held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, I had the mehndi party with all my girlfriends and my side of the family, and had henna done on my hands and my feet by an artist called Para Manko. I love how the symbolism of it all gives even more importance to the wedding day and what it means; the process of applying henna is one of the most ancient beauty practices in the world. Readying myself for marriage by having intricate, beautiful designs on my hands and feet, like every single married woman in my

family, connected me to my ancestors. On the day itself my stomach was twisted with nerves but I felt incredibly special and so different to anything I'd felt before. I'd never been so decorated – it really was a beautiful thing.

Nicholas and I had discussed what we were going to wear, although he didn't see either of my outfits until the day. He worked with a Pakistan-based British designer Zain Ali. I visited Ali's studio when I was in Pakistan in May 2022 and was able to see the fabric for Nicholas's outfit, which he'd been working on with Ali before my trip. The shoes were ready too, so I brought them back to London with me. Seeing all the photos of us on our wedding day, I just loved how both of our looks worked together.

As the day turned into night, I changed into my second outfit: an ornate coral *gharara* [a traditional outfit made up of a shirt, wide-leg trousers and a *dupatta* scarf] in *banarasi* silk brocade, which comes from an ancient hand-weaving technique found in South Asia. The party went on from 3pm to 3am, so I needed something lightweight to wear but equally as blingy as my first bridal outfit, which was quite heavy, weighing roughly 20kg.

Jewellery is a huge part of an Asian bridal outfit, and an incredible designer in Lahore called Amna Shariff worked on my pieces using techniques dating back 600 years. I incorporated heirloom pieces, including the necklace my mother wore on her wedding day, and pieces from my grandmother and great-grandmother.

Looking back, I'm glad I had a budget, and I was happy with the amount I spent, considering everything was bespoke and made from silk. Going through the photos, I hope I'll always be transported back to that day. I'd love to wear parts of my wedding outfits in the future. The evening garments I wore are so versatile, so they would certainly work for a party or someone else's wedding. Either way, I'd like to make use of it again, and then follow in my mother's footsteps by donating my wedding outfit to someone in Pakistan so that they can wear it on their special day.

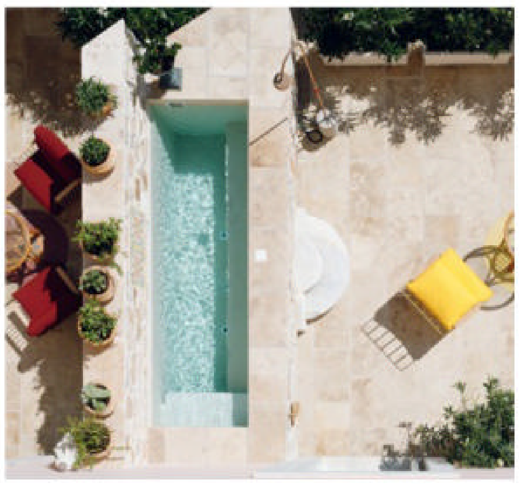
THE VENUE

Forget converted barns and bell tents, now is the chance to find a venue that 'feels like a second home', says Gaby Harvey, co-owner of the newly-opened wedding venue Kin House in Wiltshire. Hot wedding venues this year include London's The Standard (above), The Cadogan Arms and House of St Barnabas, and Wild Thyme & Honey in the Cotswolds'.

THE GIFT

Gone are the days of gift registries – 2023 is a time for bespoke. 'Presents should be thoughtfully selected to celebrate your love for the couple and commemorate the event,' says Victoire Tardy-Joubert, the founder of The Go-To. For Liane Wiggins of Matchesfashion, 'Gifts for the home that they wouldn't necessarily buy for themselves are always a great idea.'

Bag, £1,690, LOUIS VUITTON



THE HONEYMOON

Call it *The White Lotus* effect: this year, Italy is a top honeymoon destination. 'The elongated season gives those celebrating off-peak weddings more choice of honeymoon spot,' say the boutique-hotel experts at Mr & Mrs Smith, who cite Lake Como's Casa Olea, Ostuni's Paragon 700 and Aristide (above) on the Greek isle of Syros as favourites for 2023 newlyweds. ☐

PHOTOGRAPHS: FABRICE BOURGELLE, NIGEL JOHN, COURTESY OF ARISTIDE HOTEL/MR & MRS SMITH

THE FIRSTS THAT MADE ME

OUR INITIAL ENCOUNTERS IN LOVE AND SEX CAN LEAVE INDELIBLE MARKS ON OUR PSYCHE AND IRREVOCABLY CHANGE HOW WE SEE THE WORLD—AND OURSELVES. HERE, THREE WRITERS SHARE THEIR PERSONAL AWAKENINGS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSE LIZOTTE

THE FIRST TASTE OF DESIRE, AND LOSS

BY JESSICA ANDREWS

DURING MY SIXTEENTH SUMMER, MY mother's new boyfriend, Ben, took us on holiday to Cyprus. A thick wall of heat shimmered as we got off the plane. The air smelled of burnt grass and hot butter and everything was new to me: the pink bougainvillea, dense eucalyptus and the dark, sticky pull of adulthood, almost within reach.

My parents had got divorced a couple of years beforehand and my mother and Ben had been together for a few months. In our white-walled apartment complex, I watched my mother unpack tiny shorts and bikini tops she had bought especially for the trip. Ben's hand on the small of her bare back made me feel uneasy, yet there was a bright new sheen to her that I wanted for myself. I noted the arch of her wrist as she pulled her fingers through her hair and the pink razor she left on the side of the bath.

The unfamiliar heat felt suffocating, yet it also hinted at a verdant, tropical world beyond the damp, grey city that I grew up in. We ate Nutella on toast for breakfast with huge slices of watermelon, then walked to the beach in the mid-morning sun. My mother and Ben headed straight for the sea. I was worried that the water would wash off my spray tan, so I picked my way across the stones and stretched out on my towel, pressing my spine into the sand so that my stomach would seem flatter. My body was a source of strength and shame. I wished that I was thinner and more beautiful, yet I noticed the eyes of older men snag on my leopard-print bikini and it felt like power.

I dozed off beneath my heart-shaped sunglasses and woke to a tall, tanned teenage boy standing above me. Seawater glittered across his chest and I propped myself up on my elbows, trying to make myself look smaller. He said something in Greek that I didn't understand and then repeated himself in English.

'Nice tits,' he winked, and then ran off across the beach. His beauty glared beneath the yellow sun and I couldn't believe that he wanted me.

One evening, we went to a nearby taverna and sat outside eating black olives and fat tomatoes as stray cats brushed our legs. I went to the bathroom and when I returned to the table, tension crackled between my mother and Ben.

Ben stood up and drained his drink. 'I'm going to head back, then.'

'We'll stay,' smiled my mother, pouring some of her lager into my water glass. Ben raised his eyebrows, threw a couple of crinkled notes on the table and left.

A few days later, we sat at a beach bar strung with fairy lights, watching a pale moon rise over the water. A group of local girls and boys were close by, the gold ends of their cigarettes flashing in the dark. My mother followed my gaze. 'Why don't you go and sit with them?' I looked at her in horror, until I noticed the tall boy from the beach in their circle. He caught my eye and my stomach twisted in want.

I watched my mother drink from a bottle of beer with her head thrown back, dark hair grazing bare shoulders. Ben's eyes lingered on her mouth as she wiped her lips with the back of her hand and then smiled at him softly. The space between them was charged and I felt excluded.

I stood abruptly and made my way over to the teenagers. The group opened to let me in and I wavered uncertainly, regretting my decision. 'You can sit on my knee,' the boy from the beach smirked. His skin looked smooth in the darkness and I wanted to touch him, but my cheeks burned with fear and shame. I looked back at my mother and saw Ben lean forward to kiss her. I breathed in the smell of sweat and sea salt, then moved tentatively towards the boy, grasping at adulthood. He pulled me onto his knee and his friends laughed.

I barely listened to their conversation, my attention seared to the white-hot thrill of the boy's hand moving steadily up my thigh. I glanced nervously at my mother and Ben but they were oblivious, caught up in each other. The boy's hand moved across my skin until I squeezed his fingers to make him stop.

'Do you want to French kiss?' he breathed and I shook my head. He held my wrists tightly and pushed his face close to mine. My head began to throb from the heat and smoke. I felt proud that he wanted me and I thought that I wanted him, but desire was heavy and new and I didn't know how to hold it. I heard a ripple of laughter as he brought his teeth to my lip and bit down hard. My eyes filled with tears and I felt pathetic. I wanted to be loose and easy, the kind of girl who was up for anything, and I was angry with myself for losing control of the situation. There was something forceful in the boy's gaze that made me feel childlike, as if he had taken something that was mine.

When we returned home a week later, my mother told me that Ben had proposed to her in Cyprus, but she said no.

'It feels a bit soon, sweetheart,' she said when I asked her why. 'I want to belong to myself for a little while.' I remembered the sweltering air and the endless sky. I thought of the bright sheen on my mother's skin as she came into herself again and the way it rubbed off on me. I imagined the power I felt in my leopard-print bikini and how easily the tall boy took it away. My body felt

I NOTICED THE EYES OF OLDER MEN SNAG ON MY LEOPARD-PRINT BIKINI AND IT FELT LIKE POWER

dangerous and I didn't know what to do with it. I told my mother that I understood and she gave me a sad smile.
Jessica Andrews is an ELLE contributing editor and the author of 'Saltwater' and 'Milk Teeth'.

THE FIRST SEPARATION

BY NATALIA PASICHNYK

'I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU DON'T NEED me anymore. I've been thinking about this all year. But we will still be a part of each other's lives. I love you,' my husband wrote to me on the last day of 2022.

You might think that his message was preceded by a quarrel, or a slow fading of feelings. But he actually sent it because, around this time last year, I packed my suitcase and left our marital home. I did not leave the marriage, but I did take our five-year-old daughter away from our home country of Ukraine, when the war that we had heard about from our grandfathers and read about in history books broke out right on our doorstep.

In Ukraine, under martial law, most men from 18 to 60 years old do not have the right to leave the country while this war is still raging. This has forced millions of families to be separated for an indeterminate period. Mothers have become the sole guardians of their children, taking them to countries where missiles do not explode in playgrounds and schoolchildren do not learn their times tables in bomb shelters.

We are one of those families. A month after the war began, my husband and I decided that it would be easier for both of us if our daughter moved to a safe place. He stayed in Ukraine; I ended up in England with our child. And so, at the age of 40, I began my first long-distance relationship – with my husband, no less, the man I'd lived with for 16 years and whom I'd never been apart from for more than two weeks.

I know that most Ukrainians who fled the war abroad had a plan to wait for a month or two and then return home, but I had no illusions that the terrible events would end so quickly. On one hand, it's easier when you're not looking at your phone every second, waiting for the message saying: 'Come back home, it's safe here!' On the other, it is much harder to know that there is an indefinite parting ahead that could last any number of weeks, months or even years.

None of us knew how our family would hold up through a long-distance relationship and all its requisite video calls and text messages. In the first months, there was little communication. It was too hard for each of us in our new realities, and we could not be a source of support for each other. I was afraid to ask uncomfortable questions about our future because I knew we wouldn't be able to find the answers.

My greatest pain has been the separation between my husband and our daughter. He was always by her side, and I know how much he loves her. As for the two of us, I would not call our relationship perfect. But who can claim perfection in love, even in times of peace? Without there being any significant quarrelling or scandals, we had drifted apart in recent years, losing that feeling of intimacy. The crack appeared after the birth of our daughter: it was difficult for my husband, who plunged into the euphoria of fatherhood, to understand my postpartum depression. But we stayed together, and even lockdowns during the pandemic did not separate us, unlike many other couples.

Now, it is through being apart that we've found a new closeness. Strangely enough, films have become the safety blanket in our relationship. They had always been something that united us. When my husband and I met in our twenties, I was an avid fan of arthouse films and he introduced me to the magic of 1990s Hollywood movies like *Forrest Gump* and *As Good As It Gets*, brilliant in their simplicity. In the first year of our relationship, at the end of the working day, we often bought giant pizzas and watched *Friends* on an air mattress in our rented apartment.

At the most difficult moment of my life, alone with a child in a hotel next to a motorway in rural England, I found *Friends* on Netflix and did not stop watching until I had seen all 10 seasons; they became my therapy. Through them, I rediscovered that feeling of closeness and joy I'd had meeting my husband all those years ago. I sent memes to him, recalling the episode where Ross was in leather trousers, and Phoebe taught Joey how to play the guitar. Little by little, remembering our favourite moments, we began to text and call each other more often. He found a place in the apartment – on the windowsill of our bedroom – where he got signal during the constant power outages, and we discussed the latest seasons of *The Crown* and *The Umbrella Academy* as we both watched them, together but apart.

He started reading books on the psychology of relationships and began retelling them to me, adding his own analysis: 'Look, we did everything right here. And then we made a real mess of these things, but who knew…' Separation seems to have given us the opportunity to see our relationship from the outside. We both feel trapped in our circumstances, or perhaps I should call it our new life?

Soon, it will be a year since we've seen each other. The distance between us is measured not only by kilometres and borders, but by the depth of the abyss between peaceful Britain and war-torn Ukraine. The messages we send only skim the surface. We joke, cheer each other up, talk about our daughter. The real fear comes when I see messages about missile strikes in the news feed, when I write to my husband but he does not reply. Then he answers me from the shelter: 'Don't worry, I'm fine. I love you.'

I live in the belief that we will see each other soon, but I do not know if there is even a drop of rationality to it or if it is just my mind's defence mechanism.

'Watch *Palm Springs*,' I write. 'What a good one – it's a metaphor for love,' he replies the next day. In my opinion, the rom-com about a couple stuck in an infinite time loop is a metaphor for our relationship today. 'What if we get sick of each other?' the heroine asks. 'We're already sick of each other. It's the best,' the hero answers.

We know each other right down to the very smallest detail. We got sick of each other, but the involuntary separation became our key to rapprochement. During the most challenging year of our lives, not only have we survived, but so has our relationship, having gone through an arc of changes, from a fading marriage to two lonely people who possibly make a good couple.
Natalia Pasichnyk is a former senior editor at ELLE Ukraine. ▷

A FIRST QUEER INFATUATION

BY SABRINA IMBLER

WHEN I TRY TO RECALL MY EARLIEST relationship, it always takes a few minutes – a brief and blurry montage of the three boys I'd kissed in high school. They were relationships only in a contractual sense; they'd asked and I'd said yes, but the connection between us was immaterial enough to seem random.

When I think of my first queer relationships, I shut my eyes and feel as if no time has passed. As if I am still dancing inside someone's living room, spring air seeping in from the screened windows and an index finger hooking around my belt loop, pulling me in. As if I am still there, ready and yearning to fall in love.

In an essay from my collection *How Far the Light Reaches*, I wrote about my first queer breakup, and how it felt earth-shattering and tectonic as a 21-year-old: the most important thing that had ever happened to me at the time and something I would never be able to move past. But what I left out was the wonderful thing that preceded it: a first queer infatuation. It wasn't love but something just as powerful and perhaps even more precious, at least in the sense of its infrequency; a first happens just once.

Now, seven years later, I finally have some perspective. I've fallen in what I know to be real queer love, and fallen out of it, or felt it shift into something platonic. But when I think back to that first time, I still feel the same headrush, a tug to unzip my body and unspool my senses. The attachment was so strong it seemed unreasonable, obsessive.

A first queer infatuation is also a projection – not of an idealised person but a future version of yourself. It extends beyond whoever you happened to date, no matter how wonderful or special or kind they may have been. A first queer infatuation opens you up to the possibility of living a queer life, which is to say it can radicalise you. It asks you to care for yourself by finding out what kind of love and sex you desire, and perhaps what body you want. And it asks you to care for others, meaning other queer people whose right to be safe and wholly themselves may be threatened in ways you do not experience. It asks you to commit to the active, lifelong process of unlearning the bigotry and bias that are hammered into so many of us. This was the hardest and most unexpectedly wonderful consequence of my kiss in that living room: a wholesale retooling of my politics and my community. Queerness gives us the capacity to imagine more: more desire, more sensation and more care for all of us.

Of course, a first queer relationship frequently doesn't work out, which is often for the best. After that breakup, I felt gutted, ruined for love. I thought the elation of the relationship was tied to my ex, and I imagined I could only find that feeling again with that person. To cope, I did my best to remove them from my mind. I blocked them from social media, ignored their texts, disappeared from parties where I saw or even imagined their silhouette. Looking back now, I wonder if I longed to erase our memories together if it meant I could burrow back inside the ecstatic intensity of that initial desire, as if forgetting meant I could steal another first. I was dating once more, and everything and everyone seemed drab and diluted. But then I met someone who made me feel unzipped all over again, and I revelled in this new infatuation, familiar only in how it overcame me and became, suddenly, the most important thing in my life.

Now I realise you may never run out of firsts. I hope I never will. As a trans person, I am now dating another trans person for the first time. The firsts of this relationship have been manifold, not just with my partner but with my own body, and its relationship to theirs. Coming out is a process in the truest sense of the word. You come out as the same thing over and over and over again, and you may also come out as something new.

My first queer infatuation made me imagine a future radically different from my present reality and, in doing so, it taught me how to continue imagining all my wildest futures. I used to picture my life peaking early – meeting a man in college, marrying and dutifully having children, followed by decades of life that were, at best, hazy. I wanted to figure everything out early on so I'd never be late to anything. But that rush toward self-definition meant I didn't give myself the time and space to ask my body what it wanted, to look in the mirror and ask myself if the reflection fitted. My first queer relationship taught me that the greatest highs of my life have followed my lowest points. It helped me realise I yearn for a life full of firsts, for myself and everybody, however they come, and I hope we greet these with openness, curiosity and care. I suppose I am chasing the feeling of imagining that everything is possible; that I am still meeting myself and still able to unlock new shapes of euphoria.

These days, when I feel overwhelmed by a different kind of 'first' – the terrifying firsts of climate change – I take comfort in dipping into the memories of my initial queer infatuation. I remind myself that everything is possible, there can always be more, and the most exciting way to imagine your future is to envisage it with others: my queer friends, lovers, ex-lovers and ex-boyfriends, too, their futures persisting alongside mine.

'My Life In Sea Creatures' by Sabrina Imbler is out now. ◻

QUEERNESS GIVES US THE CAPACITY TO IMAGINE MORE: MORE DESIRE, MORE SENSATION, MORE CARE

PHOTOGRAPH: JESSE LIZOTTE/TRUNK ARCHIVE

Prices throughout, on request. Top and skirt, both WESLAH. Tulle skirt, MSGM

THE GOSPEL OF JULIA FOX

WITH BLEACHED EYEBROWS, HEAD-TO-TOE DENIM AND ZERO FILTER, THE QUEEN OF NEW YORK PROVES SHE WAS BORN TO BE FAMOUS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHIE SHAZAM WORDS BY JESSICA BENNETT STYLED BY PATTI WILSON

JULIA FOX IS DONE WITH MEN. NO, really, she's had it. 'I want to be left alone,' she says, in her punctuated vocal fry. 'Like, don't talk to me, don't look at me, don't bother me.' She's not just talking about men she's had relationships with – although you can make your own assumptions about one of her recent exes. This is about men at large. Men who, according to Fox, don't recognise their privilege. Men with fragile notions of their masculinity. Men who are deadbeat dads, and male politicians who make the kinds of policy decisions that leave single mothers to struggle. She's talking about men who expect women to carry the emotional burden in a relationship ('I personally think, like, unappreciated acts of service is not a love language, you know?') or expect their wives to take their last name, 'like she's his property.'

'I don't know,' Fox says, sucking on a vape. 'I feel like, knowingly engaging in a heterosexual relationship, you are signing yourself up for an unhealthy dynamic.' We are at Fox's studio in Chinatown, New York City, surrounded by overflowing clothing and a wall full of shoes, where she comes to write, usually on Mondays and Tuesdays, when her two-year-old son, Valentino, is with his father. 'Those are, like, my only two days to work,' she says. Fox is reflecting on the past year, wearing a Fox News sweatshirt that has 'The Julia Show' emblazoned across the top, which could just as well describe how it's been going.

Should you have missed the incessant paparazzi snaps or the viral red-carpet moments, the magazine spreads or the TikTok videos, Fox – longtime fixture of the downtown New York club scene; breakout star of the 2019 film *Uncut Gems*; and current obsession of a certain corner of internet culture – started last year the girlfriend of Kanye West, then ended it somewhere between West's complete meltdown and her own meteoric rise to It girl of the moment. (Of West's anti-Semitism, she says, 'I just feel so bad for everyone involved, to be honest. I feel bad for his family, his children. I feel bad for the Jewish people. Some of my Jewish friends are shook right now, and that f*cking breaks my heart. I really, truly, would've never seen him taking this direction.')

Fox is working on a memoir that will ostensibly delve into her evolution – this is what she has been writing – though she is hesitant to give much detail about what's in it. She says that she loved reading as a child, and spent time shoplifting books from Barnes & Noble, dreaming that she would one day write her own. 'It's not like a celebrity who just got a book deal and, like, got a ghostwriter to write it, you know?' she says. 'Like, I actually am about this life.' What she will reveal is that she's 200-plus pages in and the book details her life chronologically, but it doesn't revolve around her relationships. 'I didn't want to make men the focal point,' she says. But fans, don't worry: she promises there will be tea.

Some people chase fame. Julia Fox says it chased her. From an early age, first as a child in Italy, where she lived until age six with her mother and maternal grandfather, and then in New York, where she was raised by a somewhat absent father, she has provoked people. 'Everyone who used to meet me would be like, "Oh my God, you're nothing like what we heard,"' she says. 'I've been getting that my whole life. So, yeah. I don't know what it is. I just, like, elicit this reaction in people.' So as for fame, 'I was like, it just would make sense, you know?'

Fox spent her teenage years in New York, living with her dad and brother on the Upper East Side, when she wasn't bouncing between friends' houses or living with her drug-dealer boyfriend. 'We were on the run together,' she says. She went to an alternative high school famous for its lack of grades, where students were encouraged to treat the city as their curriculum (notable alumni include Jean-Michel Basquiat and Ad-Rock of the Beastie Boys).

She then spent her twenties self-publishing art books (including one called *PTSD*, about her recovery from an abusive relationship), running a fashion label with a friend and making art, including a gallery show that featured silk canvases painted with her own blood. For a time, she was an investor in Happy Ending, the now-closed Lower East Side club popular with a certain breed of early-Noughties hipster celebrity. She directed a short film ▷

> 'I THINK, TO GET ANYWHERE YOU WANT IN LIFE, YOU HAVE TO BE A LITTLE BIT DELUSIONAL'

about child sex trafficking that was never released; for a brief period she worked as a dominatrix – it was consensual BDSM, not sex, she says – which, as it turned out, was great acting prep. 'It's like one never-ending improv class,' she says.

Fox had dreams of Hollywood. By the time *Uncut Gems* was released in 2019 – she plays the girlfriend of Adam Sandler's character, a role she landed without any acting experience and for which she received critical acclaim – she was ready for her moment. But then, of course, the pandemic happened. She ended up getting a job on a TV show, then got fired for showing up late. 'Literally, it was like under 10 minutes,' she says. In the past three years, she has lost a best friend to a fentanyl overdose, gotten pregnant and divorced, then lost another friend, also to drugs.

Now, it seems, Fox is making up for lost time: at haute-couture shows, donning her now-signature raccoon eyes; interviewing Anna Delvey for the podcast she cohosts with Niki Takesh, *Forbidden Fruits*; appearing in an ad for Uber One; walking the frigid streets of New York in a latex bodysuit, styled by her friend, paparazzi in tow; posing on a mound of dirty snow for a spread in *New York* magazine, which declared 2022 'Julia Fox's year'. 'I mean, they didn't need to tell me,' Fox says with a laugh, when I ask her how that felt. 'I already knew.' One would expect no less from a woman who thinks she is her own muse.

Whether this shtick is performance – and maybe it is – you have to admit it is compelling. And in an age when it can be hard to tell what's real and what's curated real, and everyone seems worried their words may be misconstrued, there is Julia Fox, live streaming from her bathtub or on the toilet, without make-up, her kid sometimes in the background, unravelling the most insidious aspects of the patriarchy while raising a boy she hopes can avoid them. 'I'm terrified,' she tells me. 'I'm like, "Oh my God." I cannot create, I cannot produce another one of these horrible men.'

Perhaps it's in her delivery, but something about these little nuggets of wisdom is comforting. Such as when she declared, in a recent TikTok video, that 'Aging is fully in – like, fully,' somehow making this statement sound believable despite stating just nine months prior that: 'After 25, there's nothing to celebrate'. (Fox says she has used Botox, and once got liposuction – and, honestly, she might do it again. But not right now. 'I'm, like, saggy – like, things are not sitting the way they used to. But it's like, I am not gonna do a damn thing about it,' she says.) Meanwhile, she is giving tutorials on how to bleach your eyebrows – a look she has described as 'man repellent', which is particularly triggering to her ex-husband – and raging about the fact that some states in America exempt male hair-loss products from sales tax but not pads and tampons. 'It's violent, at this point, the way that capitalism extorts women,' she says in the TikTok video.

Fans who follow the Julia Fox phenomenon know that there's not much she can say that will surprise at this point… except then she manages to. On the *Ziwe* show, she responded to a question about whether she is pro-women killing men by saying: 'I think that if the man deserves it, yeah, why not? Men kill women all the time for no reason.' In fact, there was one man she did believe deserved it, she tells me. He was a drug dealer who she thought provided the fatal dose that killed her friend. She says she knew where he lived, so she stalked his neighbourhood with her dead friend's gun until she found him. 'I would literally, like, sit across the street in my car, put the seat all the way down, and watch him through the little side mirror for hours, coming and going. I'm glad I didn't kill him,' she says, taking a long drag of a joint. As it turned out, she explained, her friend likely died from a combination of things in her body, not one bad pill.

In many ways, Fox was built for this moment – her quippy one-liners make for shareable soundbites; her messiness is the antidote to the perfectly coiffed Instagram aesthetic; she has the ability to deliver a line that sounds like the unhinged rambling of a stoned Valley girl but also makes you wonder if she's actually right.

On whether she considers herself ambitious: 'I think to get anywhere you want in life, you have to be a little bit delusional. You have to be like, "I'm gonna be that bitch," you know?'

On how she feels about motherhood: 'Making a f*cking human being is superhero shit.'

On marriage: 'At the end of the day, a wife and a prostitute are both doing the same thing, but the prostitute is doing it with different men and the wife does it with the same man – they just put a fancy label on it.'

Fox says that this is her 'I don't give a f*ck' era, though it's hard to imagine she ever gave much of one. She is sitting at a small desk, with a mess of cleaning products, nappies and make-up balancing on a windowsill – as well as a Kanye action figure someone sent to her, whose head she has popped off and replaced with an alien face. 'I've definitely changed,' she says, pausing to think about it. 'I feel different from even, like, last year.'

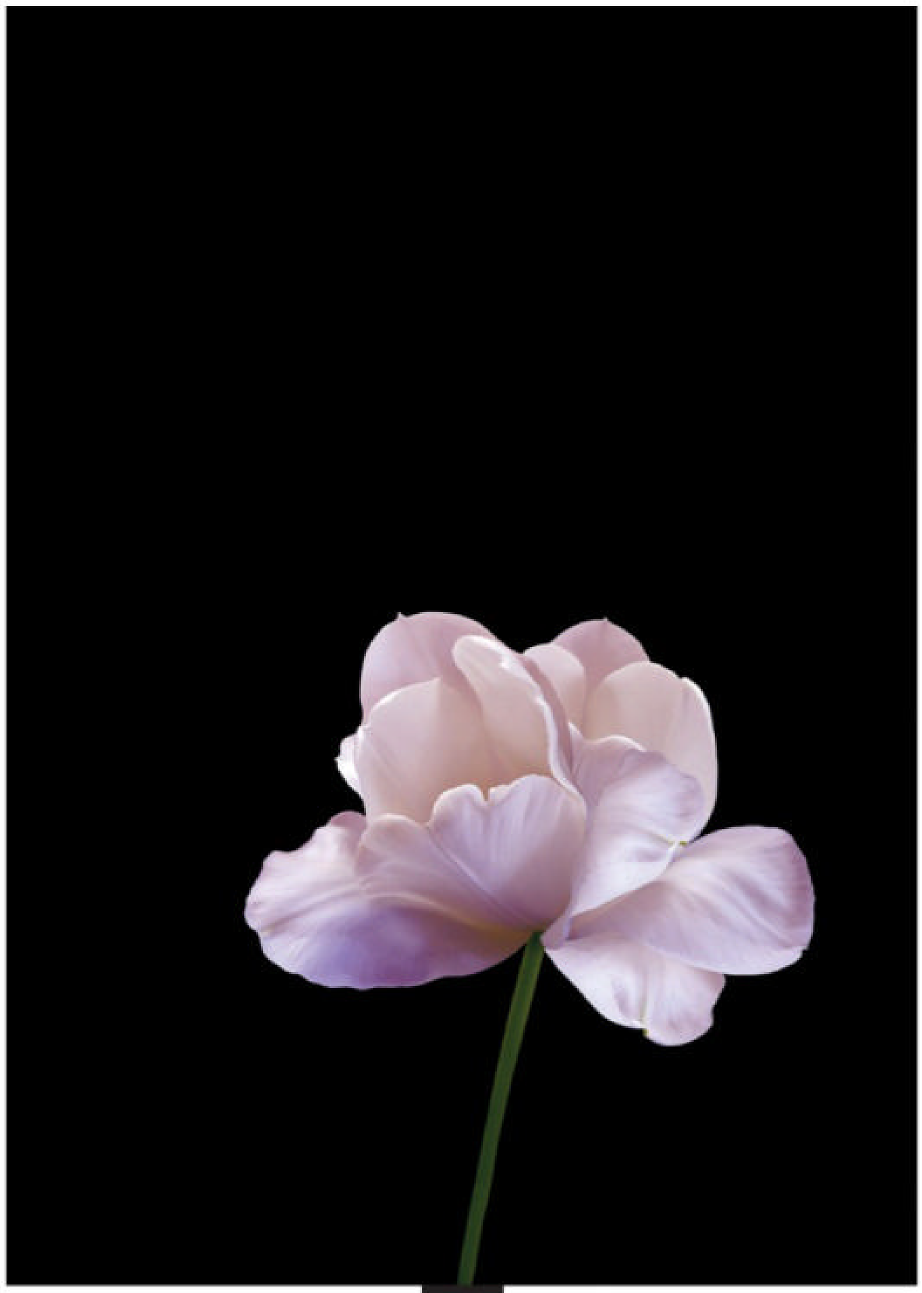
Some of this, she says, is being a parent – and the ability to comb through the aspects of her life that simply aren't serving her. 'Valentino keeps me grounded, and in such an insane way that nothing has ever been able to before,' she says. Maybe some of it is the stability that comes from some success, even if she has, technically, always made it work. 'You know what, I've been hustling and on my own for so long that it's like, I know no matter what, I'm going to figure it out. Whether that's a scam or a man or both, I figure it out.'

Or maybe, as she puts it, it's just not that deep. 'I'm just really unfazed by it all,' she says. 'I feel like, in my head, I've been famous my whole life.' ☐

HAIR: EROL KARADAG FOR WELLA PROFESSIONALS. MAKE-UP: JULIAN STOLLER. NAILS: NAOMI YASUDA FOR APRES NAIL. SET DESIGN: COOPER VASQUEZ AT FRANK REPS. PRODUCTION: CARA BRAGLIA AT CARAVISION

Corset, ACT N°1. Jeans,
LRS. Vintage tiara,
NEW YORK VINTAGE.
Gloves, WIEDERHOEFT

He doesn't remember what you wore
Or where you went
He doesn't remember the day
(Or sometimes even the month)
But he remembers the perfume on his pillow
That lingered long after your early-morning
exit
When you thought you'd never see him again
But you did
And you do



Share your story at scentmemories.org
Fragrance lasts

THE FRAGRANCE FOUNDATION UK

ELLE

BEAUTY + WELLNESS

ELLE
SKIN
SPECIAL
2023

SKIN SCHOOL

THE COMPLEXION OF YOUR DREAMS HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER TO ACHIEVE, THANKS TO A NEW WAVE OF SUPERCHARGED SERUMS AND GLOW-BOOSTING TOOLS. OUR COMPLETE SKINCARE ALPHABET SORTS THE NONSENSE FROM THE NECESSITIES

PHOTOGRAPH: IMAXTREE

THE SKINCARE A-Z

FROM MUSHROOMS, POMEGRANATES AND FORMULAS YOU CAN MIX INTO YOUR CEREAL TO THE BIRTH OF BRANDS YOU CAN TRUST, THIS IS YOUR 2023 CHEAT SHEET TO YOUR BEST SKIN EVER

A IS FOR... ACUPUNCTURE

This ancient practice has long been popular for curing physical ailments and helping emotional blockages. But it's also renowned for its face-sculpting, complexion-boosting powers. 'Facial acupuncture stimulates blood circulation to bring oxygen, nutrients and "life" to the skin. The released tension and boosted blood-flow results in decreased puffiness and softening of wrinkles,' says Ada Ooi, traditional Chinese medicine practitioner and facial acupuncturist. Other beauty editor-approved needle-wielders include Sarah Bradden and Athena Giralea.

1
Elizabeth Arden
ADVANCED LIGHT Ceramide Capsules

1 Advanced Light Ceramide Capsules, £75 for 60, ELIZABETH ARDEN

2
1
3
OLEHENRIKSEN
HydraBarrier Nourishing Face Oil
TATA HARPER
Superkind
CICAPLAST B5
LA ROCHE-POSAY

1 HydraBarrier Nourishing Face Oil, £45, OLE HENRIKSEN **2** Superkind Bio-Shield Face Oil, £149, TATA HARPER **3** Cicaplast B5 Ultra Repair Serum, £40, LA ROCHE-POSAY

B IS FOR... BARRIER PROTECTION

Ma'am, put down the chemical peel and step away from the sink… Between our microdosed retinol, copper amino isolates and armfuls of every acid in the alphabet, we're all veritable DIY derms. Our skin, however, can become hyper-sensitive as a result of our at-home science experiments: think unwelcome break-outs, red flare-ups and erratic dry patches. Putting the 'care' back into skincare is a new wave of barrier-boosting products using ceramides and comforting fatty acids to nurture your skin back to full health.

C IS FOR... CYCLOPEPTIDES

Peptides, the amino acids that boost skin strength and support collagen production, are already celebrated. Cyclopeptides (from plant extracts) are their smarter, harder-working sister. Built to sink deeply into the skin, they are especially good at reducing pore appearance, alongside their well-known ability to revive skin. Expect to see this super-ingredient everywhere.

1
FORMULA
DR FRANCES PRENNA JONES

2
KLIRA
THE SPECIAL

1 Formula Universal, £83.25, DR FRANCES PRENNA JONES **2** The Special, from £49, KLIRA

D IS FOR... DOCTORS' ORDERS

If 2022 was the year that every celebrity and their agent launched a skincare brand, this year sees doctor-formulated products taking the spotlight. Dr Frances Prenna Jones, an NHS cardiologist-turned-dermatologist, bottles her expertise in Dorset, with no-nonsense formulas to improve skin health. Consultant dermatologist Dr Emma Craythorne's Klira is an online platform where an extensive questionnaire 'analyses and decodes skin at a cellular level' to deliver a bespoke blend using active ingredients. TikTok's go-to pro Dr Shereene Idriss has also launched a skincare range – PillowtalkDerm – targeting stubborn hyperpigmentation. It's only available Stateside at present but, given her global fanbase, it'll no doubt arrive on our shores (and faces) soon.

1
whind
Sahara Silk

2
BEAUTY PIE
FRUITIZYME

E IS FOR... ENZYMES

For a gentler form of exfoliation, try an enzyme-based formula instead of hard-hitting acids. 'Derived from fruit and vegetables, enzymes break down the bonds between dead skin cells allowing them to detach more efficiently, and do so without disrupting pH levels,' says cosmetic dermatologist Dr Sam Bunting. Beauty Pie founder Marcia Kilgore agrees, adding: 'There is a lot of interesting research around the use of encapsulated enzymes for DNA repair coming through, too.' Try Whind Sahara Silk, £55, a creamy exfoliant that refines skin texture as it hydrates, and Beauty Pie Fruitizyme, £65, which pairs papaya enzymes with salicylic acid to combat razor bumps and congestion.

1 Sahara Silk, £55, WHIND **2** Fruitizyme, £65, BEAUTY PIE

F IS FOR... FEMALE HEALTH

As our hormones fluctuate, so does our skin – and often not for the better. 'Hormonal changes can cause a drop in oestrogen, which may cause the skin to appear thinner because of less collagen and decreasing elasticity, and potentially increase the appearance of wrinkles and dryness,' explains aesthetic specialist Dr Catharine Denning. Luckily the beauty industry is finally getting up to speed, launching female-focused skin clinics and formulas high in phytoestrogens (a plant-based oestrogen alternative), glycerine and ceramides targeted at those going through perimenopause and menopause. Even AI is getting in on the action, with apps such as Midday using advanced algorithms and digital therapeutics to help you track your hormonal changes so you can tailor your daily skincare routine accordingly.

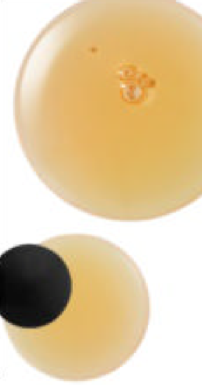
1 Menopause Treatment Mask, £31, FAACE
2 Neovadiol Multi-Corrective Eye & Lip Care, £28, VICHY **3** Night Switch Phytoestrogen & Peptide – The Molecules for Menopausal Skin, £32, LIXIRSKIN

G IS FOR... GLYCERIN

It's been buried in the small print on the back of your products for years, but this simple yet effective ingredient is now being acclaimed for its hydrating powers. A humectant by nature, it pulls moisture deep into all skin types. If you're suffering from a scaly surface, look for products with it high on their ingredient lists. Or, if you fancy a little DIY, pure glycerin (available in some chemists or online) can be mixed into your existing face cream to boost moisture-locking powers.

1 Renewal Serum, £76, SOHO SKIN
2 Perfect Canvas Smooth, Prep & Plump Essence, £43, REN

H IS FOR... HYALURONIC ACID 2.0



1 Quadruple Hyaluronic Acid Serum 5%, £18, NATURIUM
2 Hyaluronic Global Serum, £85, BYTERRY
3 Active Recovery Broth, £110, REOME

Yes, we know hyaluronic acid isn't new – it's been the darling of dry skin for years now. But in 2023 it's getting a glow up. Now HA is all about newer, smaller-molecule weights that are more effectively absorbed into the skin. When one form of HA isn't enough, innovative formulas like By Terry's Global Hyaluronic Serum are using a hydration tag team, delivering moisture to specific layers of your skin via multiple molecule weights. Alternative skincare brand Reome combines the synthetic with the natural – attaching their hyaluronic acid to snow fungus (a natural alternative to HA) alongside an extra-techy cubed form of skincare's favourite moisturising ingredient called HA3.

I IS FOR... INGESTIBLE COSMETICS

There's a whole host of pills, gummies and drinks you can swallow that promise to boost beauty from the inside. But what about a product that does it from the inside *and* out? Ulé's Avoir It All is a concoction of oils (sunflower seed, grapeseed and borage seed) to hydrate, with plant and herb powders thrown in to boost its antioxidant properties – and it's safe (and effective) to use on the skin *or* dropped into your morning smoothie. We predict many more multipurpose potions to come...

1 Avoir It All Nurturing Phyto Oil, £64, ULĒ

J IS FOR... J-TECH

1 Brightening Serum Supreme, £275, CLĒ DE PEAU BEAUTĒ
2 Bio-Performance Skin Filler Serums, £231, SHISEIDO

When you think of J-Beauty, what springs to mind? For us, it's delicate craftsmanship and formulas showcasing popular Japanese extracts (green tea, rice and camellia oil…). But what happens when you supercharge established J-beauty ingredients with next-gen technology? Shiseido has always been at the forefront of Japanese skincare, and this year is no exception. Its Bio-Performance Skin Filler serums, £231, stand-out, optimising the power of well-known ingredients such as hyaluronic acid and retinol using patented Molecushift technology. 'Our philosophy of beauty combines Eastern (aesthetic and holistic) and Western (science) approaches,' says Nathalie Broussard, Shiseido's EMEA scientific director.

1 Weekend Glow Brightening Solution, £16.50, VERSED **2** Dark Spots Serum, £24, PEACE OUT

K IS FOR... KOJIC ACID

A rising star in skincare, this fungi-derived compound is coming for your sun damage, age spots and scars. ‘The key selling point of kojic acid is that it lightens and brightens dull skin,’ says Dr Salomé Dharamshi, founder of The Sky Clinic. ‘It blocks the production of melanin to reduce hyperpigmentation and dark spots and create a more even, brighter complexion.’ Kojic acid has also made a name for its antifungal and antibacterial properties; an ideal ingredient for preventing acne and skin infections.

1 PHA Barrier Repair Serum, £85, MORTAR & MILK **2** Barrier+ Triple Lipid-Peptide Cream, £52, SKINFIX **3** Triple Lipid Restore 2:4:2, £135, SKINCEUTICALS

L IS FOR... LIPIDS

Think applying your moisturiser is the key to well-hydrated skin? Well, yes... and no. Achieving a plump complexion is also about your skin’s fat content, or, to be specific, its lipids. ‘Our dermal layers need both lipids and water to be properly hydrated,’ explains skin expert and Mortar & Milk founder Pamela Marshall. ‘Water isn’t the full story.’ Investing in lipid-rich skincare is the easiest way to put your face on a high-fat diet and banish dry skin.

M IS FOR... MUSHROOMS

If you’ve tried mushroom coffee, you may feel that think fungi should stick to risottos and fry-ups. Do give them a chance in your skincare, though, as they have surprisingly potent benefits. ‘Mushroom research has progressed significantly,’ says Austrian skincare guru Susanne Kaufmann, ‘and we now know they have powerful properties and many antioxidants.’ They also possess regenerating qualities, to calm and soothe.

1 Hydrating Face Gel, £60, SUSANNE KAUFMANN
2 Face Oil, £65, and **3** Gua-Shroom, £28, both HERBAR

N IS FOR... NAD+

A naturally occurring compound that declines from the age of 25, NAD+ (or nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide if we’re getting formal) is crucial for skin repair. Provided the delivery system is right (NAD+ is famously volatile), it can protect collagen and increase our tolerence to UV damage. Expect to see this wonderstuff appearing in skincare – try Intuisse NAD+ Face Serum, £250.

O IS FOR... ONE-DER CREAMS

How to strike a balance between a 12-step regime and absolute skinimalism? Cue the one-stop products. These smart formulas brim with complementary ingredients (both active and non) to target a host of skin concerns, cutting the need for layer-upon-layer routines.

1 The Face Cream Mask, £165, AUGUSTINUS BADER
2 Nutritious Melting Soft Cream Mask, £39.50, ESTÉE LAUDER

1 Enzyme Cleanser, £55, DR BARBARA STURM **2** Daily Milkfoliant, £65, DERMALOGICA **3** No1 de Chanel Powder-to-Foam Cleanser, £42, CHANEL

1
2
3
dermalogica
DR. BARBARA STURM
ENZYME CLEANSER
N°1 DE CHANEL

P IS FOR... POWDER FORMULAS

Skincare textures come in and out of fashion, but don't call powder products a fad. The fact they are more concentrated (as they need fewer 'filler' ingredients, such as silicone), more stable and therefore likely to work better for longer, and are better for the environment, are just a few reasons we're all getting hooked. Plus, the DIY element – mixing your dose to your desired foaminess – makes them kinda fun, too.

Q IS FOR... QUIET-QUITTING

Call it beauty budgeting, call it a conscious economy. The truth is, with only 22% of us using up products before we move on to the next, a scaling back won't hurt anyone's complexion, bank account – or our planet. Considered cosmetic consumers take the late Vivienne Westwood's advice: 'Buy less, choose well and make it last.'

R IS FOR...RICE

1
2
3
RANAVAT
FACIAL POLISH
TATCHA

Aside from its skin-soothing prowess, rice is also a rich source of peptides and antioxidants. Tatcha's Hadasei-3 complex, found in all its skincare, blends twice-fermented rice, green tea and algae for hydration. 'Double-fermenting the rice concentrates nutrients and makes it easier for skin to absorb,' says founder Vicky Tsai. 'We use a specially selected yeast strain, so the fermentation doesn't yield alcohol (like sake) but amino acids and AHAs.' Elsewhere, Ranavat's gentle exfoliator uses finely milled rice powder to polish delicate complexions and Ayurveda-driven brand Forest Essentials' Advanced Soundarya Serum, £64, has rice bran oil to keep skin soft and supple.

1 Imperial Glow, £45, RANAVAT **2** The Silk Serum, £110, TATCHA **3** Advanced Serum, £64, FOREST ESSENTIALS

1 Nightly Pro Serum, £60, DR SAM'S

1
Dr Sam's
FLAWLESS
NIGHTLY PRO
SERUM

S IS FOR...SOUPED-UP RETINOLS

We'll see a new-found consumer confidence in over-the-counter retinols as next-gen molecules with less instability and potential to irritate enter the market. 'Newer molecules, including granactive retinoid, negate the need for conversion to an active form of retinoic acid (the irritating bit), while they also last longer in the pot so you're still getting full power for weeks after you open it. We've come a long way from basic retinol,' explains Dr Sam Bunting.

T IS FOR... TARGETED SKINCARE

Spot stickers have been on the scene for a while now, doing a very good job of zapping zits, but now signs of ageing are getting the super-targeted treatment too. Sisley's pigmentation pen has a precise nib to deliver a formula that works against overactive melanin and protect against the pigment returning. For wrinkles, scribble on Murad's corrector, packed with peptides and hyaluronic acid to plump away creases.

1
2
Murad.
Targeted Wrinkle Corrector
PHYTO-BLANC
sisley

1 Targeted Wrinkle Corrector, £76, MURAD **2** Phyto-Blanc Targeted Dark Spot Corrector, £126, SISLEY

U IS FOR… UNDETECTABLE SPFS

You just ran out of excuses not to wear SPF every. Single. Day. New formulations (whether chemical, mineral or a clever combination of both) mean that everyone – however sensitive to ingredients or textures – is catered for. With over 90% of visible skin deterioration caused by UV damage, if you invest in skincare *at all*, put your money here first.

1 Moisture Surge SPF 25 Sheer Hydrator, £44, CLINIQUE **2** Invisible Serum Super UV SPF 50, £14, GARNIER

V IS FOR… VIOLET HAZE

2023's botanical skincare ingredient *du jour* is all about seeing purple. Specifically violet, iris and arctium (or burdock to you and me), now super-powering everything from serums to toners with their anti-inflammatory, brightening and firming properties. Look to Dior's Capture Totale Le Serum that uses Tuscan iris to lift and plump skin, while Oskia has gone one further, dedicating an entire collection to the blemish-clearing powers of violet water.

1 Violet Water Clearing Cleanser, £34, OSKIA **2** Ecological Compound Advance Formula, £118, SISLEY **3** Capture Totale Le Sérum, £99, DIOR

W IS FOR… WATER CREAM

As nice as water creams feel to apply, they're also a win-win for almost everyone as they flood parched complexions with ample hydration without suffocating oilier types. L'Oréal Paris Hyaluronic Acid Line-Filling Water Cream, £24.99, keeps skin feeling comfortably plush, while Kate Somerville's HydraKate Recharging Water Cream, £65, is formulated to penetrate deeper and faster. Equally as satisfying but with added sun protection is Suqqu Protecting Day Cream SPF50+, £48, which leaves skin looking deliciously dewy.

1 Revitalift Filler Water-Cream, £24.99, L'ORÉAL PARIS **2** HydraKate Recharging Water Cream, £65, KATE SOMERVILLE **3** Protecting Day Cream SPF50+, £48, SUQQU

X IS FOR… XPRESS FACIALS

Slot a treatment into your lunch hour with facials that deliver results within 30 minutes. Clarins and Elizabeth Arden both offer on-counter services to give stressed, tired skins a pick-me-up (Arden's new Moisturiser Advisor service incorporates a vibrating T-Bar massage), while a hit of LED at KMP Skin in Hanover Square, central London, will leave you instantly revived. Or pop into Harvey Nichols for Kate Somerville's 25-minute Lunchtime Peel. You'll have enough time for a Pret stop en route.

Clarins BeautyBar, £26 for 30 minutes;
Elizabeth Arden The Red Door Spa Express Services, £15 for 15 minutes;
KMP Skin LED Treatment, £95 for 30 minutes;
Kate Somerville Lunchtime Peel, £65 for 25 minutes.

Y IS FOR… YELLOW LIGHT

If acne scarring is your main concern, 'yellow laser light is the most effective for treating redness and inflammation,' says laser expert Debbie Thomas. 'By reducing inflammation, we can reduce pigmentation, improve collagen production and increase cellular renewal.' She recommends in-clinic treatments from an experienced practitioner (especially for those with deeper complexions), using modern innovations such as ADVATx or Dual Yellow, as at-home LEDs don't have the same inflammation-reducing abilities.

Yellow Laser at D.Thomas Clinic, from £375

Z IS FOR… ZZZZZZZZ

It's time to make being unconscious a beauty moment. The latest wave of sleep masks are carefully calibrated to work with your skin's biorhythm – encouraging it to self-repair while you snooze. 'During sleep is when the skin has an opportunity to repair and recharge,' explains sleep expert Mollie Eastman. Invest in Noble Panacea's 'intelligent' formula, which synchronises with your skin to release three stages of treatment, or save (a little) with Medik8's two-part mask, which uses humectants, emollients and occlusives to ensure you wake up with a seriously rejuvenated face.

1 Hydro Biotic Recovery Sleeping Mask, £43, DR BRANDT **2** HEO Mask, £57, MEDIK8 **3** The Exceptional Chronobiology Sleep Mask, £288, NOBLE PANACEA

PHOTOGRAPHS: FELICITY INGRAM FOR LIBERTY BEAUTY/TRUNK ARCHIVE

radar

WORDS BY MEDINA AZALDIN

From top: Prisme Libre Skin-Caring Concealer, £37, Givenchy. Teint Idole Ultra Wear Care & Glow Foundation, £35, Lancôme. Positive Light Silky Touch Highlighter, £24, Rare Beauty. Hyper Real SkinCanvas Balm Moisturizing Cream, £52, MAC

Wet look

Ethereal, gleaming complexions looked positively aquatic at Roberto Cavalli and Edward Crutchley, with glossy cheekbones and even juicier skin. A plush moisturiser such as MAC Hyper Real Skin Canvas Balm Moisturizing Cream, £52, will do the heavy lifting here, followed by skin-boosting bases such as Lancôme Teint Idole Ultra Wear Care & Glow Foundation, £35, and Givenchy Prisme Libre Skin-Caring Concealer, £36.50. A dusting of Rare Beauty Positive Light Silky Touch Highlighter, £24, lends an otherworldly finish.

Smooth sailing

Sloughing away dull, scaly winter skin has never been more satisfying thanks to a new wave of sense-pleasing body scrubs. Irish brand Hibernicis uses a cocktail of seven seaweed extracts in its refreshingly minty Exfoliating Gel, £39, while Caudalie's honey-infused Vinosculpt Crushed Cabernet Scrub, £27, smells like a spa-in-a-jar and leaves skin softer and more even. For something creamier, Dizziak's coconutty Body Scrub, £24, is brimming with babassu oil and rice-hull powder to polish and hydrate in one fell swoop.

All for Ulé

This 'conscious beauty' brand utilises organic plants grown in a spaceship-like vertical farm where no soil is required, 95% of water is recycled, and packaging is recycled and recyclable. Truly as good for the planet as it is for your skin.

J-MANI
Nail health is central to a Japanese manicure, which focuses on creating shine and plumpness without a slick of polish.

SUNNY DAYS AHEAD
Rain or shine, the new crop of skincare-infused self-tanning drops promises a healthy, sunkissed complexion.

GOOD SCENTS
Beauty brands are coming for your underarms. Deodorants by Glossier and Susanne Kaufmann are made for sensitive skin and smell oh-so-great.

Beauty barometer

Our guide to the talking points going up and down this month

SO CHEEKY
Buccal fat removal might be trending, but it's time to let our cheeks (no matter their shape or size) be.

AU REVOIR, MINIS
The European Union is proposing a ban on hotel toiletries to cut packaging waste. Who needs those shampoo-conditioner hybrids?

PIERCING PARTIES
Acupuncturists say multiple earrings can drain energy flow as lobes are constantly stimulated. Time to rethink that stack…

PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE, GETTY IMAGES

Hair necessities

KÉRASTASE
OUAI
Nécessaire

Known for its blemish-busting prowess, salicylic acid also excels at tackling irritation and flaking caused by dandruff. Find it in Kérastase's new Symbiose range, from £27.15, which incorporates bifidus and piroctone olamine to rebalance the scalp's microbiome, and Ouai Anti-Dandruff Shampoo, £32, a gentle formula that's safe for coloured and chemically treated hair. For its haircare debut, ultra-chic brand Nécessaire has launched The Scalp Serum, £60, a non-greasy treatment infused with soothing green tea so flaky, itchy scalps can breathe a sigh of relief.

Notes on notes

Alcohol-free fragrances are no longer relegated to an obscure shelf in Whole Foods. Dior's water-based J'adore Parfum D'Eau, £89, uses an innovative high-pressure nano-emulsion technique so that its scent of neroli, jasmine and magnolia is as close to nature as possible. E11even Fragrance Oil, £80, is herbaceous and reviving with lasting notes of patchouli and geranium, while numerology-inspired scents from Argentum's Les Parfums Infinis collection, £228, are formulated to soften skin and hair (and comes with a silver talisman as a magical finishing touch).

THE EDITORS ON… FACE TOOLS

OUR TEAM OF EXPERTS ON THE GADGETS THEY USE TO TREAT PROBLEM SKIN, FROM CONGESTION TO INFLAMMATION

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL ZAK

JENNIFER GEORGE: OLD-SCHOOL TOOLS

I'M ALL FOR A BUZZY SPECIALIST AND WHIZZY GADGET (PLUS, unashamedly, the help of the odd toxin-filled needle or two). But, day to day, I rely on tools that don't require a steady-handed doctor, batteries or instructions. In fact, the first is something almost everyone, even your dad or your gran, will likely have: a flannel.

Some might not call it a 'tool', but why not? It thoroughly cleanses, makes your facial wash go further and provides gentle exfoliation. A hot flannel draped over the face will help to open pores for a deep clean; a cold one (in the summer I keep one in the freezer) can soothe irritation or puffiness. It's a true do-it-all piece of kit.

For a slightly more thorough exfoliation, I use a konjac sponge, which is made from konnyaku, a root vegetable grown in Asia. It was originally harnessed by Japanese farmers around 1,000 years ago to cleanse their babies' skin. You simply soak it to soften to a squishy texture with an almost gel-like surface, which prevents the scrubbing from being abrasive. Rub in circular motions alone or with your cleanser. It's weirdly satisfying to use, and my skin loves it.

> A FLANNEL CLEANS SKIN AND EXFOLIATES. IT IS A TRUE DO-IT-ALL PIECE OF KIT

Another object that is steeped in history is the gua sha. It might not be as high-tech as other devices, but this hand-held tool (usually crafted from jade or quartz) has time-proven benefits in Traditional Chinese Medicine for releasing tension, draining puffiness, sculpting contours and stimulating blood flow. I use it – over a generous layer of serum or oil for slip – when travelling or battling the hangover bloat. I'm no expert, but a few vigorous swipes along my jawline, cheeks and down my neck do a stellar job of masking one too many cocktails.

1 Facial Puff Sponge with Green Tea, £8.99, THE KONJAC SPONGE COMPANY **2** Face Towel, £35, RESORĒ **3** Jade Beauty Restorer, £42, HAYO'U

TheKonjacSponge Co
Have a mini facial everyday
1

1 Gold Sculpting Bar, £185, JILLIAN DEMPSEY
2 Anti-Wrinkle Sleep Mask, £59.99, DR HARRIS
3 LED Eye Perfector, £199, CURRENTBODY SKIN

KATY YOUNG: LINE-SMOOTHING KIT

A LAISSEZ-FAIRE APPROACH TO BEAUTY COMBINED WITH A FIRM belief that more sleep and less hassle is the best answer to good skin means I save neither time nor space in my skincare routine for fiddly facial tools or massages. I would rather catch an extra forty winks or, let's be honest, binge another episode of my latest TV obsession – particularly if it means more revived eyes by morning.

Yes, you read that right: no square eyes here. For my latest beauty trick, I've enlisted the help of an LED mask to iron out both lines and bags while I sit back and press play. A science-backed theory, LED-light therapy comes in various colours. Each has its own wavelength to penetrate skin at a specific depth to do a particular job. I use amber and red light to stimulate collagen and plump lines up and out for more revived-looking eyes.

By the time I've watched the opening credits and recap (that's just three minutes), the 80 LED bulbs on my CurrentBody Skin LED Eye Perfector have done their glow-getting. And after six weeks of daily use, you start to see change, which feels like pretty low-level commitment to me. (Even better, it works on all skin types.)

> AN LED MASK IRONS OUT LINES AND BAGS WHILE I SIT BACK AND PRESS PLAY

Jillian Dempsey's vibrating tool then deals with puffiness, which I find leads to crêpiness around my eyes. Since I don't need a mirror for this one either, it makes it to my 'easy win' list. The gadget emits 6,000 vibrations per minute to stimulate facial muscles and streamline contours. I also find it incredibly relaxing pre-bed.

These multitaskers fit efficiently into my routine, while hiding any sign that I've stayed up way too late watching those aforementioned box sets. Play on… ▷

MEDINA AZALDIN: COOLING GLOBES FOR INFLAMMATION

THE BEST FACIAL I'VE EVER HAD WASN'T IN A SWANKY, FIVE-STAR hotel spa or a discreet Mayfair clinic. It was in the welcoming space of Westbourne Grove's Young LDN, a one-stop shop for all things beauty, from peels to pedicures. Senior aesthetician Roxanne Lanthier not only managed to perform endless extractions on my acneic skin without traumatising it further, but also introduced me to the calming benefits of cold-steel globes.

The cynic in me once believed that the TikTok-famous 'ice globes' were yet another fad that looked (forgive the pun) cool, but did next to nothing. How wrong I was. While skincare tools such as cleansing brushes and microcurrent devices can aggravate and sting active spots (as I've learned the hard way), these extra-cold balls offer a form of cryotherapy that, 'helps to reduce discomfort associated with larger pustules, decreases inflammation and calms any redness or heat as the cold constricts the blood vessels,' explains Lanthier.

> I ONCE BELIEVED THE ICE GLOBES WERE JUST A FAD. HOW WRONG I WAS

On my active breakouts, she recommends gently gliding the ice globes from the centre of the face out and up towards the lymph nodes after prepping with a hydrating serum. There are also the additional depuffing benefits to perk up tired eyes. After every use, simply clean your tools and keep them in the freezer.

1 Evercalm Barrier Support Elixir, £44, REN **2** Cooling Derma-Globes, £100, OMOROVICZA **3** Mini Super-Cryo Massaging Orb, £14, NURSE JAMIE

KATIE WITHINGTON: TONE AND TEXTURE MULTITASKING

AS EARLY ACNE SUFFERERS MAY UNDERSTAND, MUCH OF MY younger years involved derailing family supermarket trips by heading straight to the beauty aisle in search of those extraction tools that promised me clear skin by the next school day.

Today, the thought of these manual blemish-busting techniques and my enthusiastic face-scrubbing sends a shiver down my spine. My current routine focuses on tackling post-acne texture and stubborn uneven tone, and includes two targeting tools that don't demand lots of time.

While my love of scrubs persevered into my twenties, I now opt for a much kinder cleanse, with Foreo's vibrating, bacteria-resistant silicone bristles. With three intensities and skin-clarifying, LED-heated technology, known for balancing discoloration when used regularly, this tool is easy to use, which is what appeals to me most: exfoliation with spot-busting benefits, all in the time it takes to do my second cleanse.

> MY CURRENT ROUTINE INCLUDES TWO TOOLS THAT DON'T DEMAND LOTS OF TIME

The other portion of my skin's new-found clarity can be credited to radiance-boosting red-light therapy, low-vibration facial massage and therapeutic gentle heat: it sounds like the treatment list from a salon, but in reality is nothing more than 10 soothing minutes of Solawave before bed. No squeezing or scraping, just smart skincare tools made simple.

1
2
3
FOREO
FACE HALO

1 LUNA 4 Plus, £379, FOREO
2 Makeup Remover Pad, £7, FACE HALO
3 Advanced Skincare Wand, £123, SOLAWAVE

1
2
3
Medik8
HYDR8 B5 INTENSE
THE RECOVERY LAB
FACE GYM. PRO
dr P L

1 HYDR8 B5 Intense Hyaluronic Acid, £59, MEDIK8 **2** FaceGym Pro, £515, FACEGYM **3** The Contour Pro, £249, DR LEVY

DR EWOMA UKELEGHE: MICROCURRENT FOR LIFTING

TAKE MY ADVICE: THE ONE THING I'D SUGGEST YOU INVEST in right now is the FaceGym Pro. Yes, I know – it retails for over £500. But, for me, it's been worthwhile. Powered by patented triple-wave technology, the device delivers electrical impulses to activate the facial muscles, which provide deeper action than traditional microcurrent devices.

Within 10 minutes, your face will look like you've had an express facelift. It also does wonders for combatting morning puffiness. The only downside to this device (apart from the price) is that the electrical impulses are pretty intense, particularly on bony prominences such as the forehead. Start on a low setting and work your way up according to what you can handle.

For those who aren't keen on tweakments, this is a great option to consider if you want the results of Botox but are wary of the needle. Equally, for those well-versed in non-surgical procedures, facial tools are a great way to amplify the results achieved.

> THE BEST AND MOST LONG-LASTING RESULTS ARE SEEN WHEN DEVICES ARE USED DAILY

But remember, as with any tools, consistency is key. The best and most long-lasting results are seen when something is done daily. For any technophobes however, don't overlook manual facial massage (look up one of the many tutorials on YouTube). It's effective, equally therapeutic – and, crucially, free. ☐

HEAVY METAL

EXCESS COPPER IN OUR WATER CAN DAMAGE HAIR AND AFFECT COLOUR. BUT L'OREAL PROFESSIONNEL HAS A SOLUTION

ANYONE WHO COLOURS THEIR HAIR probably knows the feeling of disappointment when your new shade begins to fade faster than expected; it can become brassy, lose its intensity or start to dull before you've even posted your Instagram Story.

Couple this with dryness, breakage and split ends and you may find yourself questioning your hair-care routine. Are blonding, styling or heat damage to blame? Possibly. But there could be a surprise culprit: the copper particles found in the tap water.

Most of us aren't even aware of it, but the water you use to shampoo and condition actually contains copper microparticles, which can penetrate and accumulate inside the fibres of your hair.

But why does our tap water contain copper? The particles mainly occur as a result of corrosion of the metal pipes and plumbing systems used to distribute water to our homes. While this isn't likely to cause health problems, it may be impacting on the appearance of your hair, causing colour fade and breakage. In fact, research carried out by L'Oréal Professionnel found that in some areas of the UK, up to 64% of people have an excessive level of copper present within their hair*.

This metal build-up can damage the cuticle, leading to dryness and breakage. It may also leave a residue because copper coats each strand while penetrating the fibre itself. This can prevent hair from receiving necessary moisture and nourishment, leading to damage and colour fading.

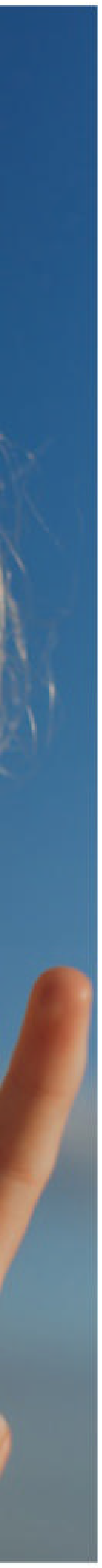
Beyond all this, however, copper build-up could be undoing all the time, effort and money you put into your hair-colour routine. This is because an accumulation of the metal begins to react with the chemicals present in colouring and blonding products, which can cause discolouration and dullness. You may notice that natural or treated blonde colour goes brassy, looks orange, or develops a green or grey tinge.

The more porous your hair is – i.e. how much space there is between the cuticles – the more likely it is to be affected by this copper build-up. That's because porosity increases how easily your strands absorb moisture, oils and the metals within water.

Some hair types are simply more porous naturally, and both hormones and age can play a part in porosity levels. Excessive heat styling, chemical treatments and colouring may all cause hair to become more porous over time. In turn, that's likely to increase how much copper your hair absorbs and the potential damage it could cause.

As copper particles build up within, as well as on top of, the hair shaft, it's difficult to wash them away with regular

WORDS: CHLOE LAWRANCE. PHOTOGRAPHY: SHUTTERSTOCK. *L'ORÉAL PROFESSIONNEL ANALYSIS ON WORLDWIDE COLLECTED STRANDS VIVO ANALYTICAL RESULTS (BR 217, FR 176, USA 149, CN 143, RU 138, GER 130, UK 108, IND 92, SA 29). **PRE-TREATMENT PATENT GRANTED IN UK. SHAMPOO PATENT GRANTED IN UK. MASK PATENT GRANTED IN FRANCE, CHINA, US, BRAZIL, MEXICO AND JAPAN. ***L'OREAL PROFESSIONEL



shampoo alone. The key ingredient to help counter a copper build-up is glicoamine – and, luckily, this is becoming more accessible to those wanting to protect their hair, thanks to ranges such as L'Oréal Professionnel's Metal Detox. Over seven years of research informs the patented** technology used to create the products, which work to help prevent the impact of copper build-up, both in the salon and at home.

'Glicoamine is a tiny molecule that, like copper, is able to penetrate individual hair fibres,' explains Adam Reed, L'Oréal Professionnel editorial artist. 'It targets and surrounds metal particles, using chelating properties to bind and neutralise them, even when they're sparsely distributed.' Worried about the potential side effects that come with over-technical names like this? Don't be. This wonder ingredient works its magic without stripping the natural oils that give your hair that soft, shiny and moisturised feel.

UP TO 64% OF US HAVE AN EXCESS LEVEL OF COPPER PRESENT IN OUR HAIR

While there are various other steps you can take to reduce the accumulation of metals in your hair – installing a shower-head filter or wearing a cap when swimming in chlorinated water are just two examples – a comprehensive routine involving glicoamine is the secret to help target and prevent the colour fade and breakage that too much copper can cause.

'The most important measure to help prevent copper build-up is to continually maintain the condition of hair,' explains Reed. To protect your colour and prevent excess damage, then fight the good fight with L'Oréal Professionnel's four-step salon-standard system. Adding it to your routine will also help to deliver vibrant, long-lasting colour.

The first step can start in salon with the Metal Detox Metal Neutralizer, which Reed recommends to balance any copper within the hair ahead of professional colouring treatments.

'In the salon, I spritz it over the hair in sections, leave it for 20 seconds or so, then continue to apply colour as normal. Gorgeous looking, healthy hair with a brilliant colour result – win win!'

The next step is the Cleansing Cream Shampoo. Enriched with glicoamine, this rich formula transforms to a foam as it lifts and removes excess copper within the hair fibre. Together, these products deliver the best results for your colour: even, long-lasting and full of shine.

Once the hair has gone through this detox process to remove the copper build-up from within the strands, it's essential to protect against further build-up, nourish and prevent damage. The Protector Mask conditions and strengthens hair while boosting lustre.

Finally, the lightweight Leave-In Concentrated Oil delivers fast-absorbing softness as it plumps hair fibres, leaving colour bright and illuminated and your hair sleek and smooth.

'Use these last three steps regularly at home as part of your wash-day routine to ensure the copper particles are not accumulating and causing damage between appointments,' suggests Reed.

So, next time your hair is in dire straits, remember there's no need to send out an urgent SOS (Save Our Shade) – your lifeline could be just a bottle away.

TIME TO SHINE

HOW TO USE L'OREAL PROFESSIONNEL'S METAL DETOX TREATMENTS

CLEANSING CREAM SHAMPOO
Wash your hair weekly with the Cleansing Cream Shampoo to experience up to 87% less breakage***.

ANTI-DEPOSIT PROTECTOR MASK
For optimal results, use this mask after the Cleansing Cream Shampoo. Leave on for one minute for luxurious softness and shine.

LEAVE-IN CONCENTRATED OIL
Apply daily to towel-dry or dry hair. Spread one or two pumps evenly from mid-lengths to ends to help reduce hair breakage by up to 97% and unlock up to twice the shine***.

❶

L'ORÉAL PROFESSIONNEL PARIS
Metal Detox
SERIE EXPERT

1 Cleansing Cream Shampoo, £26
2 Anti-Deposit Protector Mask, £28
3 Leave-In Concentrated Oil, £26

❷

Metal Detox
L'ORÉAL
SERIE EXPERT

❸

L'ORÉAL PROFESSIONNEL
Metal Detox
SERIE EXPERT

Discover the Metal Detox range at lorealprofessionnel.co.uk/metal-detox

Metal Detox

HEALTH IS WEALTH?

ONCE UPON A TIME WE SIMPLY BOUGHT MAKE-UP. NOW, WE BUY THE IDEA OF AN ETERNALLY IMPROVABLE SELF AND A FUTURE WHERE WE FEEL BETTER, LOOK BETTER AND *ARE* BETTER. BUT HAS OUR WELLNESS OBSESSION GONE TOO FAR?

WORDS BY JENNIFER GEORGE
PHOTOGRAPH BY AHMED HASSAN

IT'S EASY TO FORGET HOW RELATIVELY new the concept of 'wellness' is; it's become so ingrained in our daily lives that it feels like it's always been a permanent fixture. A glance at my inbox showed that 121 emails arrived last week with the word 'wellness' in them (that's 20% of all my mail), including one promoting potato lattes, another prompting me to bathe in seaweed, and another announcing the launch of a £160 electronic device that teaches you how to breathe. There's a lot of wellness on offer, but how much of it do we actually need? And could our obsession with achieving the kind of optimum health and happiness that the wellness industry offers be bordering on unhealthy?

Despite my best efforts and innate cynicism, many of these trends have somehow seeped into my life. As I write this, I'm two weeks into a month off alcohol, which probably sits under the wellness umbrella. I'm not eating bread, as I've been advised by a nutritionist that I 'might' have an intolerance to wheat. When I go out later, I'll be carrying – as I do at all times – a pouch containing three crystals. I don't know why, I don't know what they do, but it's become a superstition. And for the cherry on top, on the flight home from a recent holiday, I stuck holistic herbal 'sleep patches', formulated by a beauty editor-beloved acupuncturist, on my temples to supposedly help send me into a slumber.

Yet despite all that, I find myself rolling my eyes on a daily basis at the onslaught of the (usually) unsubstantiated bullshit that this industry promotes. But while it's (mostly) not for me, if it makes someone feel good, it's harmless, right? Perhaps not.

'My biggest complaint is that it's all on *you* to fix things,' says Rina Raphael, a journalist-turned-wellness expert-turned-wellness detective who dives deeply and thoroughly into the pros and cons of the industry in her new book, *The Gospel of Wellness*. '"You should be ▷

taking a bath." "Have you tried yoga?" Generally, the things that are being suggested cost either money or time.' (One report showed that the average Briton spends over £200 monthly on health and fitness routines.) What should be fixed, she says, are the systems, especially for women, that mean we're not feeling 'well' in the first place: healthcare, community, and social norms.

The global wellness industry is worth around £3.6 trillion, and it's estimated that figure will be pushing £5.75 trillion by 2025. It's likely all over your social-media feeds, too: #wellness has been used on over 61 million Instagram posts and has 8.5 billion views on TikTok. Perhaps one reason it's snowballed is precisely because it's so loose in its parameters. 'Wellness is this nebulous, undefined area,' says Raphael. 'There's no agreed-upon definition of what "well" actually is, partly because it's so personal. Almost anything can be seen as self-care. Buying property could be seen as self-care! So every brand wants to call itself a wellness or self-care brand. It's the new industry *du jour*, replacing fashion and beauty. And it's being treated like fashion now; every few months, there is a new trend.'

Another reason for this is, of course, social media. Wellness 'experts' are available at our fingertips, drowning us in tricks, tips and mantras that we otherwise wouldn't be exposed to. 'Twenty years ago, if there was a health guru who wrote a book, you might read it for 10 minutes each day before bed, let's say,' says Raphael. 'But now, influencers are posting for you several times a day. And how often are you seeing an actual doctor? Once or twice a year?' It's an uneven playing field, she says, where science is outgunned by social media.

The movement has also taken advantage of our own worries around beauty standards and unrealistic expectations for our bodies and looks. The marketing of products explicitly designed just to make you prettier or thinner seems old-fashioned at best, harmful at worst. 'Wellness', however, is gentler and more holistic, disguising words like 'diet' and 'weight loss' with self-care-aligned ideas like 'cleansing' and 'fasting'. Even Weight Watchers, the 60-year-old diet company that boomed in the 1980s, attempted a rebrand in 2018, renaming itself WW International – 'wellness that works' – apparently shifting its focus to healthier habits and fitness instead of shakes and scales. The move was an immediate flop, but a clear example of the attempt to hop on to and monetise wellness trends.

Dr Pooja Lakshmin, a practising psychiatrist and founder and CEO of Gemma, a women's mental-health community centring on the impact of equality, looks at the darker side of the wellness industry in her book *Real Self-Care* (the subtitle of which summarises her feelings on the industry: 'A transformative programme for redefining wellness: crystals, cleanses and bubble baths not included'). 'As you can tell from that, I have some strong feelings on the so-called solutions that are sold to women as a panacea for our problems,' she tells me. 'The premise is that, if you partake of one of these many commodified wellness activities, you will feel better. But you can't meditate your way out of a 40-hour work week without childcare. Our social systems have failed us, and the onus is being put on us to fix ourselves.'

These failures – social pressures, the rising cost of living, the lack of mental and physical support – are, both Dr Lakshmin and Raphael say, a huge driver in the rise of wellness. 'Modern life is becoming harder and harder. We are working longer hours, money is tighter, our medical systems aren't reliable,' says Raphael, 'and this industry dangles solutions in front of us. "We'll take care of your stress, loneliness, sleep…" People feel helpless and they're searching for meaning and magic pills to fix things.'

> 'PEOPLE FEEL HELPLESS AND THEY'RE SEARCHING FOR MAGIC PILLS TO FIX THINGS'

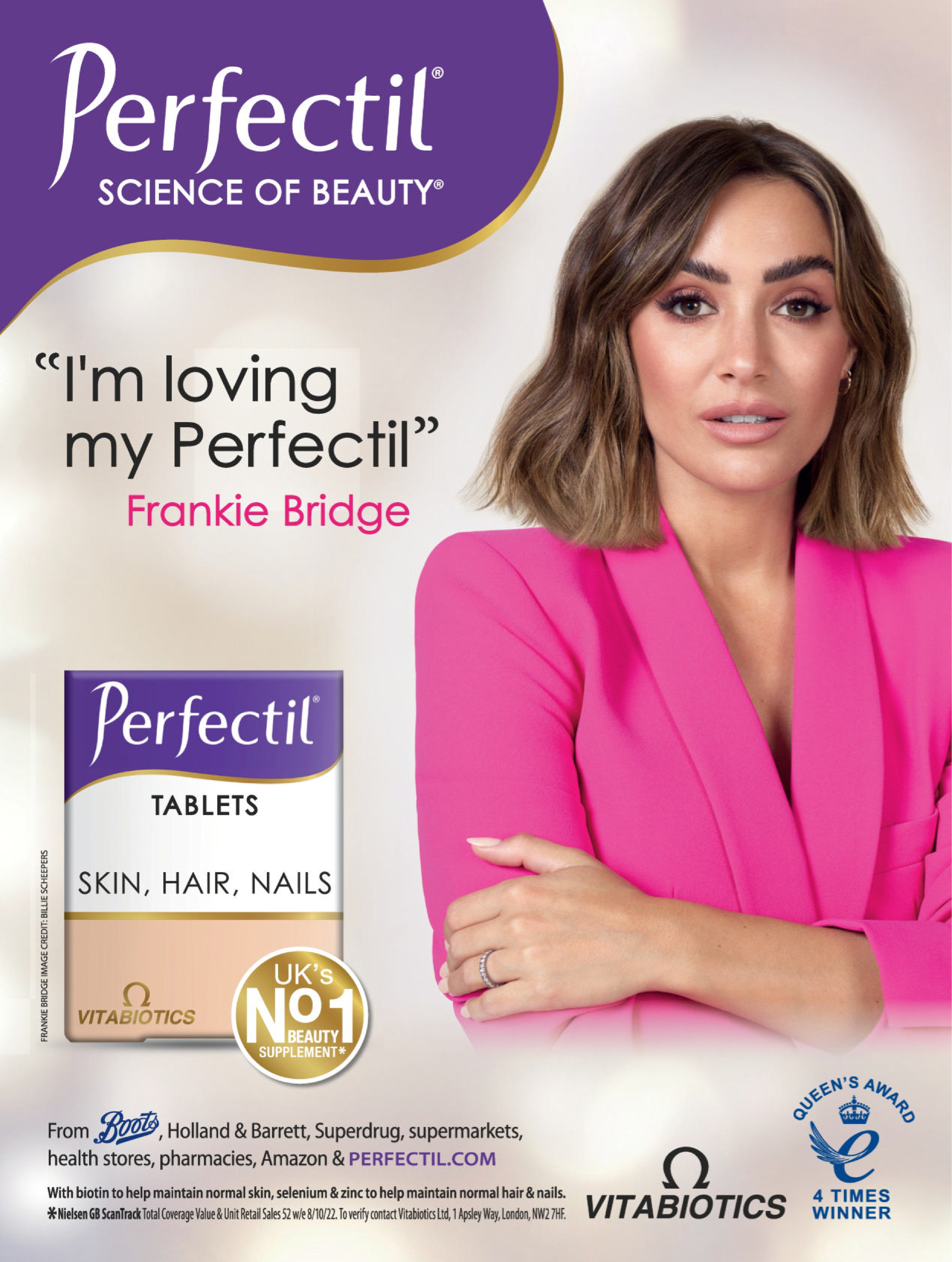
'The tyranny of self-care' is how Dr Lakshmin puts it. 'Women are being sold breezy fixes in pastel-coloured packages, then made to feel at fault when they don't work.' And, of course, those packages – the gut supplements and the gong-bath workshops and the designer leggings everyone wears while doing them – don't come cheap. It's a system that is, ultimately, undemocratic, but makes you believe you're depriving yourself of something important, even vital, if you're not partaking.

'So much of this industry is based on belief and placebo,' adds Raphael. Which isn't all bad, of course. If you believe something is making you feel better mentally or physically, that's obviously a good thing. And so much of it is highly subjective. A bubble bath can help one person escape a deep mental funk; to another, it is just a wash. What we should be wary of is putting too much faith in wellness promises. 'Brands will use words like "boost", "promotes" and "aids",' says Raphael, 'but not "fixes" and "cures". Because they can't claim to do that.' No amount of deep breathing or potato lattes will help to cure the mind of entrenched negative thought patterns or deep-rooted trauma.

Picking and choosing what helps you, placebo or not – without putting too much faith in that practice or pressure on yourself – is a good place to start. Be open-minded, without blind faith. 'Distinguish legitimate benefits from marketing copy,' as Raphael puts it. I like to dip my toe in and test the waters, and I'll continue to carry my silly stones around with me, but I won't blame them if I have a bad day. I slept like a baby on that red-eye flight home but, alongside the holistic patches attached to my face, I washed down two drowsiness-inducing painkillers with a miniature bottle of whisky. That's my version of wellness, and you can have that tip for free. □

SUMMER
in PARIS
ELLE
ELLE
ELLE
ELLE is a trademark owned by HACHETTE FILIPACCHI PRESSE, France

LINGERIE COLLECTION
Available at **www.next.co.uk**
elleboutique.com | #parisiananywhere



Perfectil®
SCIENCE OF BEAUTY®

"I'm loving my Perfectil"
Frankie Bridge

Perfectil®
TABLETS
SKIN, HAIR, NAILS
VITABIOTICS
UK's Nº1 BEAUTY SUPPLEMENT*

FRANKIE BRIDGE IMAGE CREDIT: BILLIE SCHEEPERS

From Boots, Holland & Barrett, Superdrug, supermarkets, health stores, pharmacies, Amazon & PERFECTIL.COM

With biotin to help maintain normal skin, selenium & zinc to help maintain normal hair & nails.
***Nielsen GB ScanTrack** Total Coverage Value & Unit Retail Sales 52 w/e 8/10/22. To verify contact Vitabiotics Ltd, 1 Apsley Way, London, NW2 7HF.

VITABIOTICS

QUEEN'S AWARD
4 TIMES WINNER

10 of the best: serums

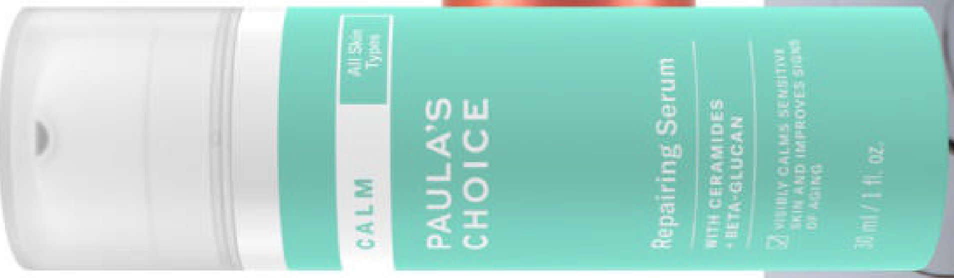
From glow-getters to skin soothers, there's a formula here for everyone

WORDS BY KATIE WITHINGTON

FOR BRIGHTENING

1

FOR SENSITIVE SKIN


2

FOR PLUMPING

3

4

FOR THE BODY

5

FOR SMOOTHING

FOR DARK SPOTS

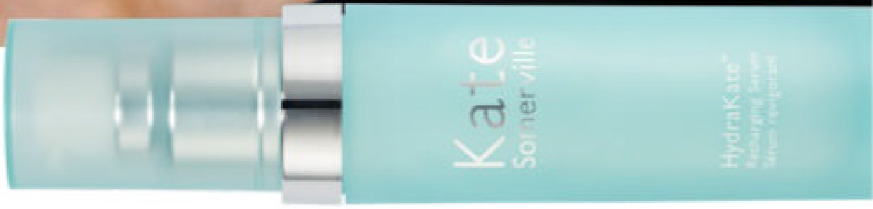
6

FOR BLEMISHES

7

8

FOR THE EYES


9

FOR HYDRATION

10

THE ALL-ROUNDER

1 Violet-C Brightening Serum, £80, TATCHA **2** Calm Repairing Serum, £36, PAULA'S CHOICE **3** Revitalift Filler Hyaluronic Acid Serum, £24.99, L'ORÉAL **4** N°1 De Chanel Revitalizing Body Serum-in-Mist, £67, CHANEL **5** Resurfacing Compound, £138, U BEAUTY **6** Even Tone, £110, OMOROVICZA **7** Vinopure Blemish Control Salicylic Serum, £32, CAUDALIE **8** Hyalu B5 Eye Serum, £32, LA ROCHE-POSAY **9** HydraKate Recharging Serum, £67, KATE SOMERVILLE **10** Advanced Génifique Youth Activating Concentrate, from £34, LANCÔME

PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE, GETTY IMAGES

ELLE
Junior
A PARISIAN
state of mind
portofinokids.com | elleboutique.com | #parisiananywhere
ELLE is a trademark owned by HACHETTE FILIPACCHI PRESSE, France

ELLE

IN+OUT

THE DREAM FACTORY

WHAT INSPIRES YOU? THIS MONTH, WE ARE ENERGISED BY THE HOME OF PHOTOGRAPHER AND GALLERIST RONAN McKENZIE, ARE MOVED BY ALL THINGS RED IN INTERIORS, AND REDISCOVER THE THRILLING ELECTRICITY OF NEW YORK

PHOTOGRAPH: SERENA BROWN. STYLING: GRACE CLARKE. HAIR AND MAKE-UP: STEFAN JEMEEL AT STELLA CREATIVE ARTISTS, USING COLOR WOW, NARS COSMETICS AND DR BARBARA STURM SKINCARE

HOME SWEET HOME
RIGHT: RONAN McKENZIE WEARS DRESS, £740, ISSEY MIYAKE. BOOTS, HER OWN. ALL JEWELLERY THROUGHOUT, HER OWN

The interior life of: Ronan McKenzie

The London-based photographer, filmmaker, designer and artist shows ELLE around her gallery-like home

WORDS BY KATIE O'MALLEY PHOTOGRAPHS BY SERENA BROWN STYLING BY GRACE CLARKE

AND THE KITCHEN SINK
DRESS, £2,315, SAINT LAURENT BY ANTHONY VACCARELLO

RONAN McKENZIE'S LIFE IN ART BEGAN at home. 'My parents allowed me the freedom to carve out my own space,' she explains, recalling a childhood spent drawing on her bedroom walls with a Sharpie pen, and commissioning an artist to spray paint the London skyline on those same walls with her first-ever pay cheque. 'Home is where I learned through example and practice, filling it with positive influences. When I come home, I want to feel everything in there is taking care of me.'

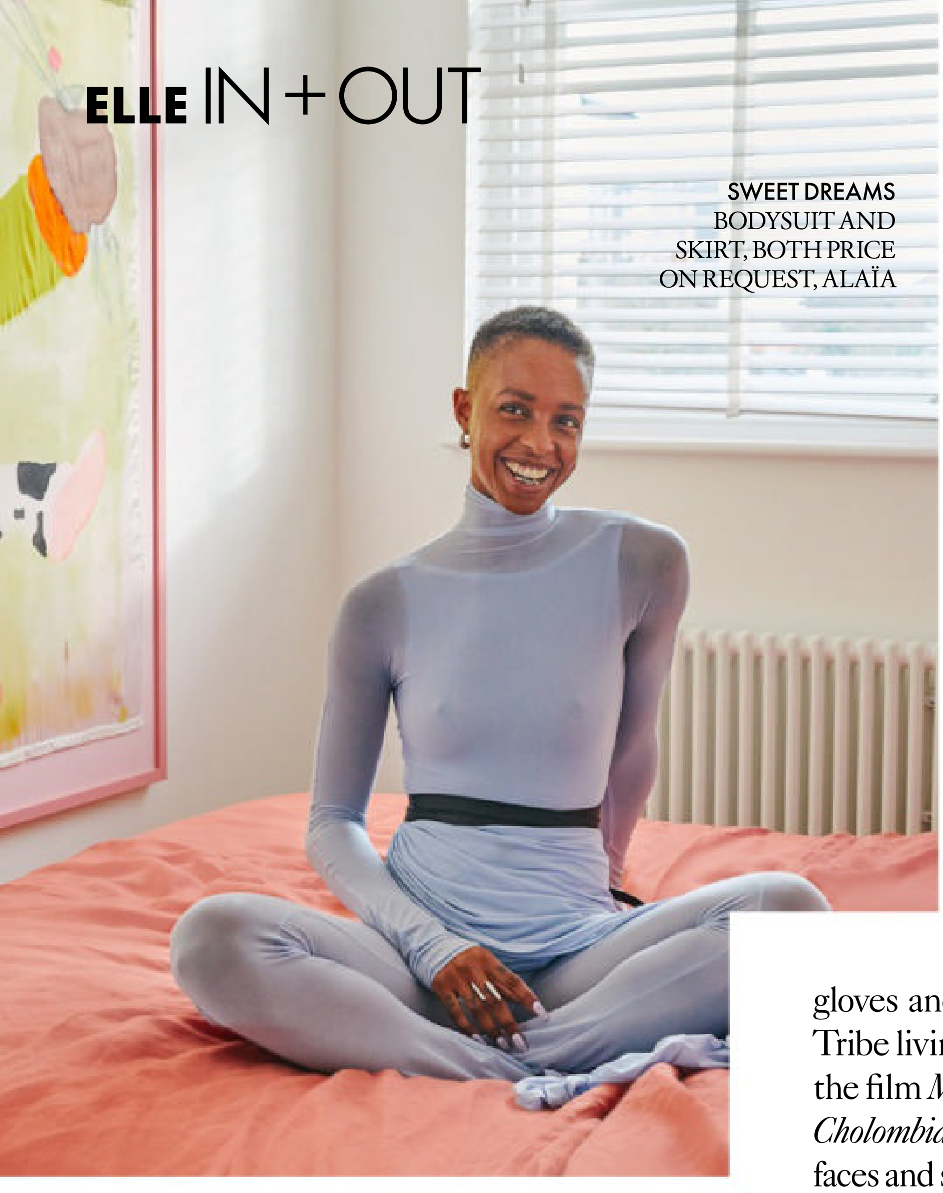
The Walthamstow-raised multi-disciplinary artist appeared on the scene in 2015 with her debut photography exhibition, *A Black Body*. Following shows in New York and Basel, McKenzie launched her clothing brand Selasi – meaning 'God hears me' in the Ghanaian language Ewe – in July 2021, just months after opening her gallery and community events space, aptly named Home, in 2020. 'Home is a feeling of comfort, acceptance and being welcomed,' she says.

When it came to buying her own first home in 2021, McKenzie's artistic eye helped her see the potential in a split-level attic flat atop a Victorian terraced house in Clapton, east London. 'Even though the corridor and rooms are small, it has so much light and character,' she says of the property, located a short walk from Hackney Downs and Abney Park. 'It's neighbourly and multicultural. You feel like you can really get fresh air and breathe.' With large skylights spanning the living room and bathroom, the flat's space feels limitless and provides unparalleled views of the city's horizon: 'I don't feel boxed in, even though I'm in a busy part of London.'

A fan of Aesop's interiors ('I love African vernacular architecture and natural textures like clay'), as well as architects like John Pawson and Sir David Adjaye, McKenzie describes her style as 'warm, clear and unexpected'. 'I like to feel really comfortable and grounded, but I also like to experiment and play,' she says. Homemade ceramic busts sit alongside Sam McBratney's children's book *Guess How Much I Love You*. A poster emblazoned with the stirring phrase 'Unify, Strategize, Rise, Repeat' hangs metres away from family photos and self-portraits, all framed by We Are Facility. 'Their placement shows how important they are in my daily life.'

Elsewhere, curved Zara Home and Ikea mirrors decorate the flat's walls, painted soft white to maximise its size. 'I like being able to see everything – I don't want to hide anything from myself,' she says. 'I love being able to see what I'm wearing from all angles. Mirrors are a way to self-celebrate.' Today, the reflection shows the waistband of thermal lilac leggings peeking out between her Selasi two-layered towelling jumper and trousers.

Most of the flat is decorated in neutral beige and cream hues, but it's in her bubblegum-pink painted bedroom where McKenzie feels most relaxed. While the location of a primary school opposite might send many running for the hills, she finds it peaceful. 'If I'm having a stressed moment, I open the window and can hear kids in music ▹



SWEET DREAMS BODYSUIT AND SKIRT, BOTH PRICE ON REQUEST, ALAÏA

class or running around, playing. It reminds me of easier days.' At the foot of her bed sits a large Alfie Kungu painting of two figures standing back to back. 'A lot of my practice is about relationships, the mixture between collaboration and personal identity,' she says. 'This piece celebrates being individual, but in a group. It's joyful.'

McKenzie is purposeful with all of her interior-design decision-making. 'I like to present things in a way that's beautiful. Everything I have in my house is intentional,' she says, as evidenced by objects such as her maroon washing-up gloves and the fluffy patterned A New Tribe living-room rug. Photo books from the film *Moonlight* and Amanda Watkins' *Cholombianos* are left open on table surfaces and shelves to inspire and encourage a pause for reflection. In the bathroom, a bottle of Kava perfume from her partner's brand, Deya, is artfully placed alongside Hernán Herdez jewellery in ceramic bowls. 'Jewellery is so beautiful, so I like to engage with it even if I'm not wearing it,' she says.

With limited storage, McKenzie not only uses a USM modular display unit and exposed Ikea kitchen shelves to house spices, tea and crockery, but also as a place to display cherished art, such as a vintage comb from Kenya and a Simone Bodmer-Turner ceramic vase. 'The idea of presentation is to encourage myself to engage with objects in innovative and exciting ways, and spark daily joy,' she says, gesturing to her open wardrobe. 'I can see all of my clothes and feel inspired to try different looks, whether it's a sheer Jean Paul Gaultier dress or a Bordeaux leather suit from SRVC, my friend Ricky Harriott's brand.'

Unquestionably, it's her collection of art that she prizes most in her home. 'They're really for me,' she says, referring to the large Ricardo Passaporte Dalmatian painting in the hallway, Phoebe Collings-James' ceramic pot and a new piece by visual artist Joy Yamusangie ('I've got a tattoo from that painting on my hand'). 'I'm very particular about my space – it's where I rejuvenate and recharge,' she says. 'The only people who get to see these artworks are those who are special to me.' Count it as an honour to have made the cut. ☐

STAY GROUNDED

ANIMAL PRINTS, ORGANIC SHAPES AND EARTHY TONES FOR AN EASY APPEAL

1

3

4

5

6

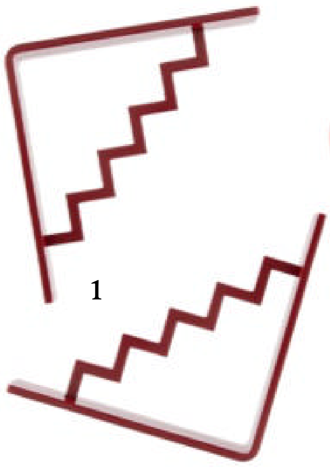
7

2

1 Cushion, £35, ARKET **2** Bath mat, £65, BAINA **3** Candle, £65, DIPTYQUE **4** Stool, £1,321, ZANAT at Mytheresa **5** Book, £150, STEVEN KLEIN at Matchesfashion **6** Vase, £70, RAAWII **7** Plate, £75, SERAX

HAIR AND MAKE-UP: STEFAN JEMEEL AT STELLA CREATIVE ARTISTS, USING COLOR WOW, NARS COSMETICS AND DR BARBARA STURM SKINCARE

1 Bookends, £250, JERMAINE GALLACHER at MATCHESFASHION **2** Lucky cat, £180, LEBLON DELIENNE **3** Rug, £1,230 MOUSSEM **4** Sofa, £3,839, HEAL'S **5** Candle, £160, LOEWE at SELFRIDGES **6** Vase, £99.99, UNCOMMON MATTERS X H&M HOME **7** Five-piece cutlery set, £65, LES OTTOMANS **8** Poster, £40, STOFF STUDIOS **9** Mug, £45, PALM ANGELS at BROWNS **10** Lamp, £139, HAY **11** Chair, £319, VITRA **12** Lobster candle, £9, THE WAXNESS **13** *Cartagena Grace* book, £85, ASSOULINE



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Stoff Studios

8

9

10

12

11

CARTAGENA
GRACE
ASSOULINE

13

FERRAGAMO SS23

Turning red

Fiery, glowing scarlet is on the agenda thanks to Ferragamo, Alexander McQueen and Bottega Veneta. Bring the boldest shade into your home with these fearless crimson pieces

COMPILED BY GRACE CLARKE

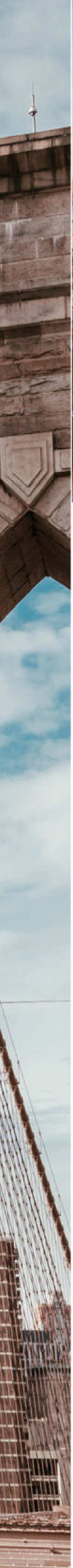
PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXREE

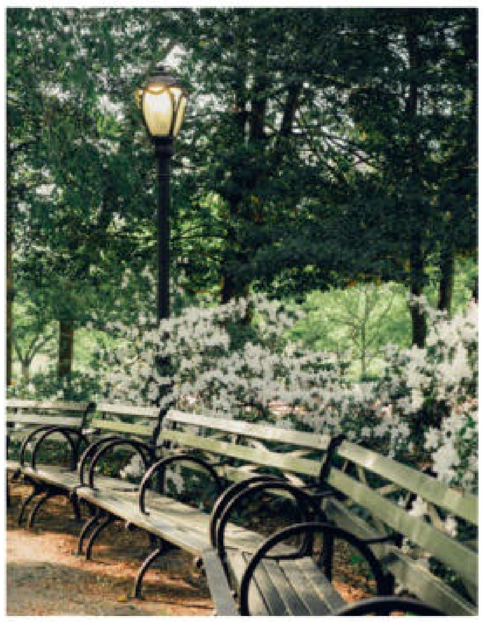
THE NEW NEW YORK

THE PANDEMIC HAS WROUGHT INEVITABLE CHANGES ON MANHATTAN, BUT IT'S BACK – AND BIGGER, BRIGHTER AND BOLDER THAN EVER

WORDS BY ENI SUBAIR

PHOTOGRAPHS: ARTHUR BROGNOLI, AUDREY AMARO, HEATHER SHELVIN / UNSPLASH, JOE THOMAS





PARK LIFE
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: CENTRAL PARK; CONEY ISLAND; CROSBY STREET IN SOHO; THE JAMES VELORIA VINTAGE STORE ON EAST BROADWAY

OVERWHELMING, EXCITING AND A LITTLE DAUNTING. THAT WAS my experience the first time I took a trip to New York, in August 2016. Rejuvenation and recuperation had been firmly on the agenda – I now guffaw at my naivety. Instead, that two-week trip was a blur of visits to vintage store Beacon's Closet in Williamsburg, a stone's throw away from our Airbnb, trips to Times Square to witness the city roar even further into life as the sky grew dusky, laps around Central Park while soaking up the remnants of the summer sun, and sauntering along the blooming High Line – an elevated park located on Manhattan's west side. The relentless humidity combined with my desire to flaunt my new Levi's mini-skirts, cami tops, and glosses and eyeshadows purchased at one of the umpteen Sephoras suddenly at my disposal forced me to abandon our quiet plans and seek chaos in the city.

My next visit was in 2019, and I spent my time like most tourists: boarding a ferry to see the Statue of Liberty, lunching at the Blue Box Cafe inside the Tiffany store, watching a Broadway show and, of course, touring the Empire State Building. It was still fun, but between my first trip in the summer of 2016 and the spring of 2019, something seemed to have shifted. Full of possibilities and adventure, the city was still buzzing, but my budget only took me so far. There were great shops and bars on every corner, but what if you wanted something a bit more unusual? The energy seemed flatter, duller.

I couldn't deny that I was hankering after some remnant of the city's edgier past. Yes, the 1970s were more dangerous and grittier, and brunch was harder to come by. But thanks to lower rents and diverse neighbourhoods, they were a furnace of creativity and innovation. Long after the graffiti was cleaned up and the down-at-heel areas gentrified, New York still traded on that reputation. But was the old New York still there to be found, or had it faded into memory?

And then, last year, I returned. Post-pandemic, the city had clearly suffered, but I couldn't ignore the creative pulse vibrating through it at the peak of summer. And I wasn't imagining it. Consultant Gia Kuan, a New York resident for 13 years, has also noticed the shift. 'There's a new energy bubbling and I'm here for it,' she says. 'It's raw and exciting and makes space for a new generation to be heard – there's some sense of liberation that wasn't [here] 10 years ago.' Kuan, who moved to the city from Melbourne, Australia to pursue her career, notes how the pandemic forced people to be more creative. 'They found new ways to work despite many economic and physical obstacles. With that came a silver lining, and right now what I'm seeing is a very inspiring birth of new talents and creatives in the city, experimenting with new narratives and new crafts. I think an exciting moment is coming.'

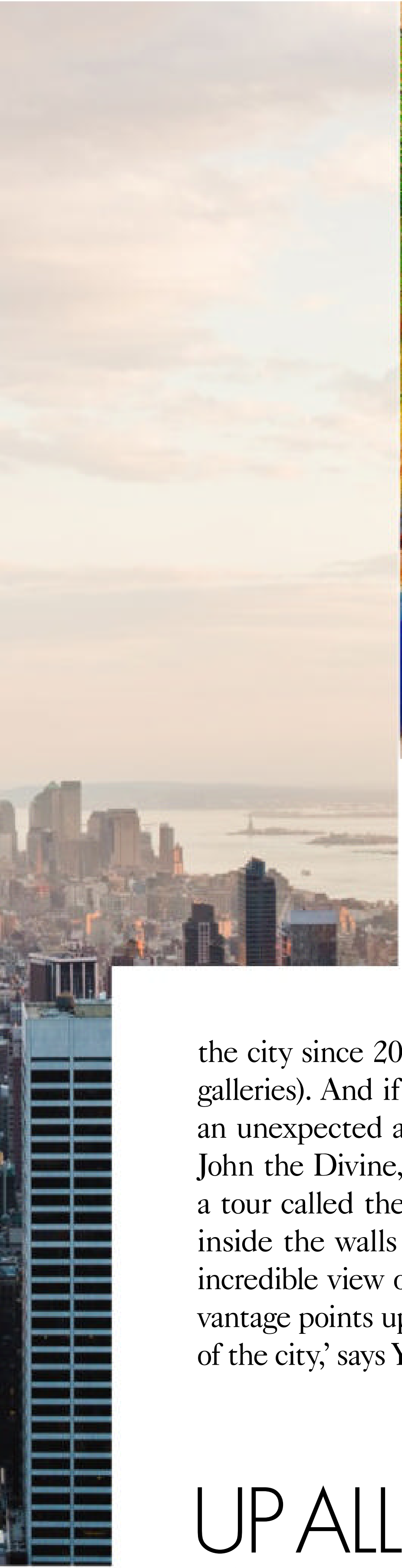
Fashion critic and longtime New Yorker Steff Yotka weighs in on the renaissance of the shopping scene. 'A lot of the things that were good before the pandemic have remained good, like James Veloria and the Eckhaus Latta store, which is in the same mall. This is largely due to these shops growing because they were able to withstand the [pandemic] closures and increase that sense of community – you want to hang out with your friends there.' On my visit to James Veloria, Vivienne Westwood corsets were awaiting a new home and Comme ▷

BALTHAZAR
BOULANGE

JERSEY BOYS
MEAN GIRLS
6756

des Garçons trousers could be found alongside rails of sensual negligée worth taking for an after-dark spin (or worn to a sweaty, underground rave). Yotka also gives a shout-out to Lolo in Brooklyn: ‘It feels like the kind of store that doesn’t exist a lot, where there’s a real curation from someone who has an eye. Anytime I need to buy someone a little gift, or a thank you, or a birthday present, I love to go there’. She rates Dimes Square, too: ‘Everyone who’s cool lives there and hangs out there – it’s become a real nexus,’ she says. Dimes, opened by Sabrina De Sousa and Alissa Wagner in 2013 on Canal Street – and from which this ‘micro-neighbourhood’ gets its name from – is an ideal brunch spot, particularly when you’ve gone that bit too hard the night before. Serving everything from acai bowls to fresh juices, it’s worth adding to your roster of diners.

Keen to get further under the skin of the city, I sidestepped the Met and Guggenheim (though they are, of course, worthy of several visits) for Fotografiska in Gramercy Park, where I saw ‘Hip Hop: Conscious, Unconscious’, an exploration of the global impact of the genre. Meanwhile, Screen Slate has been providing a thorough rundown of arthouse and repertory cinema in



SKY'S THE LIMIT
ABOVE: GILLIGAN'S AT SOHO GRAND HOTEL

the city since 2011 (it's also a stellar resource for scoping out galleries). And if you're feeling a little more adventurous, try an unexpected angle on a landmark such as Cathedral of St John the Divine, one of the largest Gothic cathedrals. 'It has a tour called the Vertical Tour – you walk up the staircases inside the walls of the cathedral to the roof. You have this incredible view of Manhattan because it's one of the highest vantage points uptown and there's an unobstructed panorama of the city,' says Yotka.

Soho Grand Hotel is one of the best spots to stay in should you be looking to experience New York old *and* new, satisfying your taste for tourist spots as well as grassroots art, fashion and culture – and a great shower, which feels like heaven after an eight-hour flight from the UK. The location is everything: equidistant from Midtown Manhattan and Brooklyn, so you could walk to a major contemporary gallery, such as MoMA, which in the past year has had huge-scale installations from contemporary artists including Barbara Kruger. (In 2023, it's placing the spotlight on the photographer Ming Smith, and Méret Oppenheim – the artist who inspired Phoebe Philo's fur-lined Birks.) There is also a great gift store and a stunning sculpture garden.

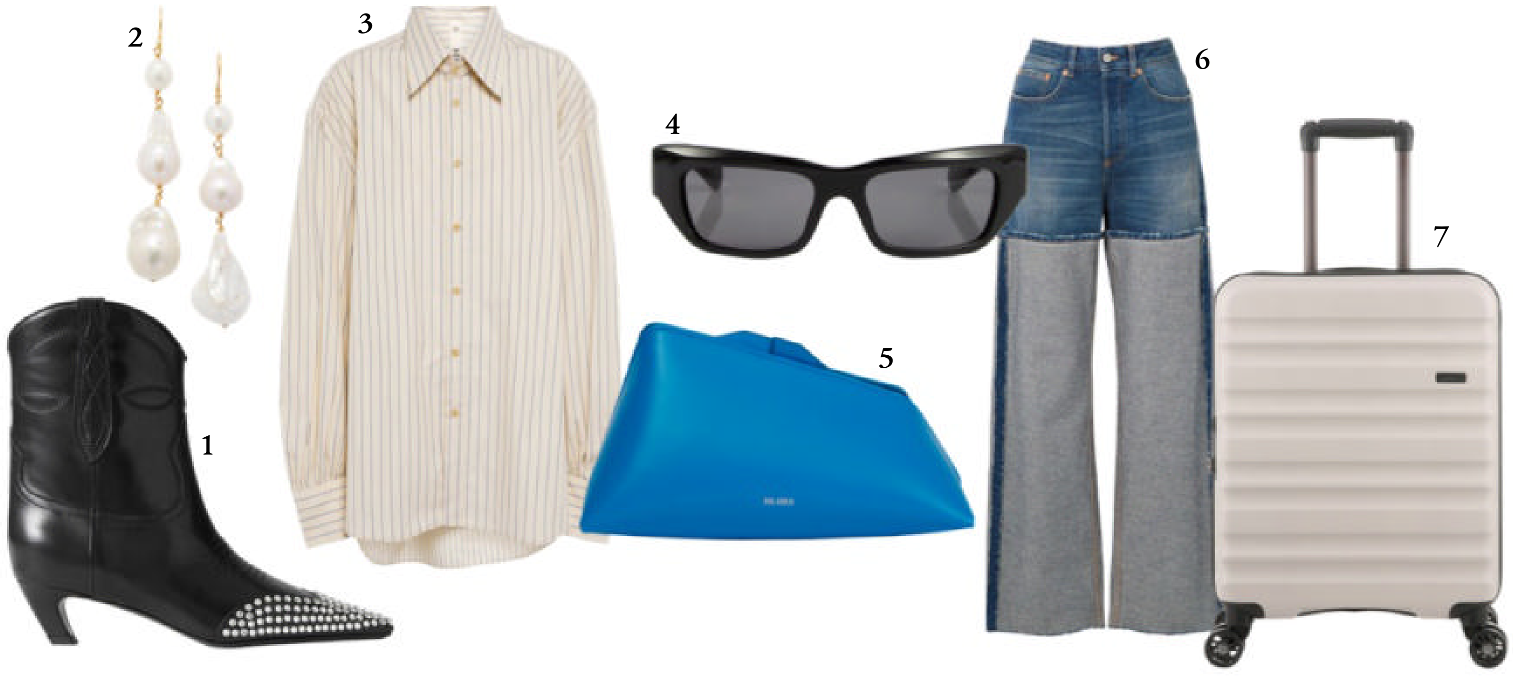
In SoHo itself, for a real, low-key taste of New York, you have several legendary haunts, including Fanelli Cafe, the 175-year-old restaurant frequented by NY artists way back when, and now. Don't be surprised if you spot a few familiar faces – *Succession*'s Nicholas Braun (Cousin Greg) is a regular, Chloë Sevigny is partial to a visit, and apparently Chris Rock can often be sighted there too.

But don't just stick to the hotel you're staying in. 'As a New Yorker, I'm not staying in the hotels, but the hotel bars and the lobby scene around them is great,' says Yokta. 'If you head to the Chelsea Hotel bar on the right night, there's an amazing hostess called Taylor, who wears vintage 1950s dresses and opera gloves. And it just feels like you're stepping into another time.' I couldn't resist swinging by – or, rather, up to – the rooftop of the Standard, another New York icon, to drink and dance at Le Bain. If there's a club with better views, I'd like to know what it is. And, after all, glamorous decadence has also always been part of the city.

What is most exciting about New York right now? According to Kuan, it's everything and everyone. 'I love the openness and fast embrace of newness, and I love that everyone is here fighting for a dream of their own. It's very inspiring.' There you have it – New York is officially back. ☐

UP ALL NIGHT

STAY STYLISH IN THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS WITH NEW YORKER-APPROVED ADDITIONS



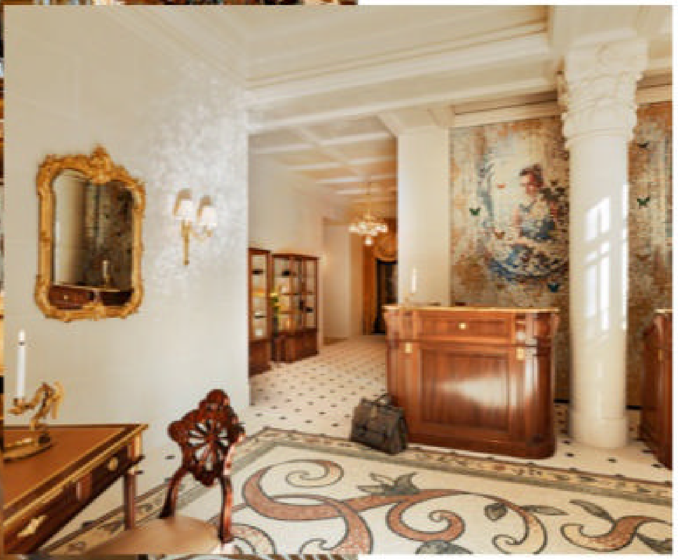
1 Boots, £1,050, KHAITE **2** Earrings, £550, JIL SANDER **3** Shirt, £435, PETAR PETROV **4** Sunglasses, £320, GUCCI at Mytheresa **5** Bag, £630, THE ATTICO **6** Jeans, £370, MM6 MAISON MARGIELA **7** Suitcase, £159, ANTLER

PHOTOGRAPHS: JOE THOMAS, MICHAEL GRIMM, STOCKSY, KIT SUMAN/UNSPLASH, MERIC DAGLI/UNSPLASH

BUSINESS CLASS

THE *ELLE* TEAM ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO TRAVEL FOR WORK – A LOT. BUT WHEN HOT-DESKING AROUND THE WORLD, WHERE EXACTLY DO THE EDITORS STAY?

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'
A SUITE AT THE MAYBOURNE BEVERLY HILLS



TONAL LUXURY
SHADES OF TOBACCO AND CARAMEL DEFINE THE INTERIORS IN HÔTEL MADAME RÊVE (LEFT AND ABOVE)

CITY OF LIGHT
THE VIEW OF SAINT-EUSTACHE FROM HÔTEL MADAME RÊVE

HÔTEL MADAME RÊVE, PARIS

Paris Fashion Week is catwalk shows, excitement and timeless allure. It's also long days, late nights and little sleep. The right hotel to return to at the end of the day can make (or break, if it's not so welcoming) a marathon week. The fashion pack's current accommodation of choice? Hôtel Madame Rêve. Don't let its location – a former post office – fool you: to step through the door is to be transported to a chic, quiet corner of Paris with panoramic views and plush rooms. (It's a *very* grand post office.) Public areas are airily opulent, while rooms feel modern: wood-panelled and comfortable, with a touch of Japanese minimalism. You'd struggle to find a more central location – moments from the Louvre and a short walk to show venues like Le Grand Palais – but the clever architecture allows for spectacular views of the Paris rooftops (including the lovely Saint-Eustache, which seems to hover right outside the windows), while the use of greenery, including a private rooftop garden, means there's a sense of space that makes it an oasis in a packed city centre.

Fashion-week visits to popular watering holes La Suite Girafe, Parcelles and Bar des Prés are a must, but you don't need to leave the building when you're in need of refreshments. Downstairs, an elegant bar-café is the perfect spot for a bite or coffee, all soaring columns and flattering lighting. A third-floor restaurant – La Plume – offers deliciousJapanese fusion food, but it's the rooftop bar that stands out the most. Visit at sunset to see the twinkling lights of Paris emerge beneath and around you.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JÉRÔME GALLAND, RAY MAIN, ADRIEN DIRAND, HBO, GETTY IMAGES

MAYBOURNE BEVERLY HILLS, LOS ANGELES

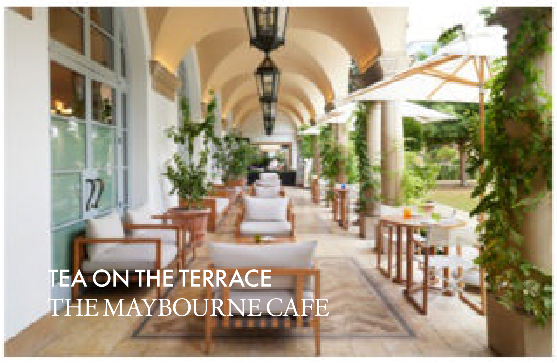
Some things seem to be true of any trip to Los Angeles. The sun will always shine and there will be a moment when you consider turning yourself over to a life of juicing and 5am yoga classes. And if you're an ELLE editor, a visit to LA will almost always include the Herculean effort of pulling together a celebrity cover shoot.

That's where the Maybourne comes in. There are times when you just need a cosseting, calm, sun-drenched slice of Californian hospitality to ease your cares.

The location doesn't hurt. On a work trip, it can be hard to find time for window shopping, but here Rodeo Drive is a five-minute walk away. It's also a 15-30 minute Uber from many of the sprawling city's most popular destinations: West Hollywood, the canyons, the Getty Museum and the Santa Monica beach are all on your doorstep (by LA standards).

The hotel is built on a grand scale (and the spacious terrace restaurant is an excellent spot for people-watching), but it's anything but aloof. Rooms are endlessly inviting; decorated in pastel-desert shades, with curvy chairs and the squashiest cushions you'll ever encounter. You'll want to sink into them and never leave.

Should you have more downtime than us, there's an elegant spa, two bars and – the jewel in the crown – the rooftop pool. Sitting under a white sunshade with the water reflecting the blue sky of yet another perfect Los Angeles day, it's tempting to postpone your flight back to the office for a day or two – or more.



TEA ON THE TERRACE THE MAYBOURNE CAFE

IN STYLE THE LUXE LOOK OF THE PORTRAIT MILANO

PORTRAIT MILANO, MILAN

Milan lives and breathes fashion, so when we're in town we do the same: checking into a hotel owned by the Ferragamo family, no less. The latest in their small group of Italian residences – and the first in Milan – the Portrait Milano is housed in a Renaissance seminary, recently converted by star architect Michele Bönan. At its heart is an imposing colonnaded courtyard, known as the Piazza del Quadrilatero, which connects elegant Corso Venezia to the fashion district of Via Sant'Andrea, and houses exclusive boutiques under the loggia. There can't be many better places in the city to grab a table than in the shade of one of the stone pillars, where you can watch the fashion pack come and go.

Like Italian style, the hotel is old-school luxury meets refined glamour: rooms are inviting and contemporary – think woods, whites and neutrals, and mid-century upholstery – with strong accent colours to bring it all to life. The bar and restaurant similarly focus on local classics – aperitivi and crowd-pleasing menus – with just enough of an update to keep things fresh. And beneath the action at street level, there's a cosy spa and spectacular swimming pool – where columns emerge from the water beneath an arched ceiling.

As you'd expect, the shopping could hardly be better – Gucci, Prada, Bottega and the like are just outside – but the central location means that, when we want to get out of work mode, it's just a few minutes walk before you're taking in the wedding-cake beauty of the Duomo, or the peace and calm of the Indro Montanelli gardens.

ONE ELLE OF A STAY

If you like ELLE, you'll love this. The first ELLE hotel – called Maison ELLE (what else?) – is now open in Paris.

SWEET DREAM

And while you're there, stop off at the Louis Vuitton space, LV Dream in the 1st arrondissement, to sample the treats of superstar pastry chef Maxime Frédéric.

TWICE AS GOOD

The first Birch hotel, located just outside London, caused a stir when it opened in 2020 thanks to its cool, creative vibe. Expect the second, in Selsdon, to do the same this year.

BAROMETER

TRAVEL EXPERIENCES TO PUT ON YOUR WISHLIST – AND THE ONES TO AVOID

NETFLIX AND CHILL

TV tourism is a big trend for 2023, with fans flocking to filming locations. We can do without *White Lotus* obsessives ruining the view, so we'll dodge Sicily this year.

HEDONISM

The wellness wagon keeps on rolling: annual leave is for self-improvement, too. The destination of choice? Puerto Rico.

FOOD MILES

Luxury once meant ordering whatever, wherever. Those days are over. Premium hotels now have kitchen gardens or beehives: true exclusivity is hyper-regionality.

Postcard from... Mexico City

Chef Ixta Belfrage on where to eat, drink and play

INTERVIEW BY EVE WALKER

CHECKING-IN
The Red Tree House Hotel, set in a Spanish Revival-style mansion in Condesa, is stylish in a mismatched way and painted in sunset shades of red, orange and yellow. I love the central courtyard, where breakfast is served every morning.

ON THE GO
I adore tamales. The street vendors tend to roam around, so listen out for the call of 'Tamaaales!' and hurry in the direction of the sound for life-changing food.

SECRET SPOT
Head to the Chinampas of Xochimilco – beautiful man-made islands of fertile land where locals grow fruit, vegetables and plants. Organisations like Pachoa do boat tours of these farming networks. Float along as you listen to frogs croaking and birds chirping.

DINNER DATE
You can't go to Mexico City without going to Contramar. I'm not into fancy restaurants, so this is the perfect balance of refined and laid-back. It's a hot spot for fashionable Mexicans, an ideal place to dress up for.

RETAIL THERAPY
The city has so many wonderful markets to get lost in, most of which offer a mix of food and artisan products. La Ciudadela, Mercado de San Juan, Mercado Medellín and Mercado Coyoacán are some of my favourites.

A TASTE OF MEXICO
In Mexico, there's no better breakfast than tacos. One of my favourite taquerias is Tacos Hola El Güero, on a beautiful tree-lined street in Condesa. I highly recommend the chiles rellenos (stuffed pepper) tacos. Walk it all off at Parque México, then head to Panadería Rosetta for coffee.

PHOTOGRAPHS: LOU JASMINE, MAUREEN EVANS, JEREMY LWANGA/UNSPLASH, GETTY IMAGES, ALAMY

müller
MARCH
INTO SPRING
müller
Light
Strawberry
Serving suggestion
WITH A SPOONFUL
OF SUMMER
FIND YOUR FLAVOUR TODAY

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

ESSENTIALS EDIT

LUXURY VEGAN HAIRCARE

At FFØR we create luxury vegan haircare to elevate natural beauty without stereotypes – but our story goes further. Expertly developed and thoughtfully sourced we are fully committed to nurturing and protecting the planet.

Going beyond our products we are dedicated to supporting salon communities, collectives, and initiatives whilst encouraging confidence and creativity. BEYØND HAIR.

Visit our website fforhair.com and follow us on IG @fforhair

LOOK YOUNGER LONGER REGENTIV SPECIALIST SERUM (WITH RETINOL)

This delicate and oh so effective serum for lines, wrinkles, crepey eyes and neck, vertical lip lines, sun damage and much more. The unique formulation of retinol palmitate, aloe vera, vitamin E, SPF, moisturiser – perfect to use twice daily. 35ml £32.95, 50ml £49.95, 105ml £79.95, 200ml £149.

To receive an exclusive 15% reader discount apply code ELLE15 when ordering. www.regentiv.com or call 01923 212555 for advice or to order. Please see website for full range and special offers.

BORN & RAISED IN SPARTA

Born five generations ago, Nikkitas has become the Spartan embodiment of exceptional products of high quality (Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Honey, Olives). The type of soil, climate conditions and thousands of years of experience, result in the finest olive oil and honeys.

DRINK AT THE SOURCE

Nikkitas is produced entirely in Sparta in our family-owned groves – cultivation, collection, pressing, bottling, packaging and control checks. Our polyphenol-rich Olives are handpicked and pressed in under 24 hours to retain all the fruits' natural nutrients; our antioxidant Honeys are pure, unheated, unpasteurised, collected and packaged on-site. Our 100% recyclable branded mailing box is perfect for gifting and personal deliveries.

www.nikkitas.com

FASHION EDIT

MITCH DESUNIA

The Mitch Desunia AW/2023 collection is making waves in the global fashion industry, with its focus on young elegance. The brand has always been known for its classic and elegant designs, catering to the mature women's market. However, this year, they have decided to shift gears and focus on young elegance, and they've found the perfect representation of this in their newest brand ambassador, 13-year-old Xianelle Dela Rosa from the Philippines.

Xianelle made her debut as the brand's newest ambassador during New York Fashion Week, where the brand showcased their 15-pc collection. She walked as the showstopper, and her presence on the runway was a true representation of the brand's voice and marketing campaign for the current year.

The creative director of the brand, Mitch Desunia, had this to say about their choice of Xianelle as the brand's ambassador: "When I saw her set card, I had an impression of her as a young girl with an elite taste in fashion. She's just a perfect representation of the label's voice of marketing for the current year."

The brand's decision to focus on young elegance is a bold move, and it's clear that they are confident in their marketing campaign and the image they have chosen to represent them. With Xianelle as their brand ambassador, they are not only aiming to capture the market of young, elite buyers in the global fashion industry, but they are also striving to influence young girls to choose elegance over fast fashion mediocrity.

The Mitch Desunia AW/2023 collection is definitely one to watch, and we can't wait to see what's next for this brand and their young brand ambassador, Xianelle Dela Rosa.

Visit: www.mitchdesunia.com and follow on IG: @iammitchdesunia

Photography: MJ Feliciano

final word

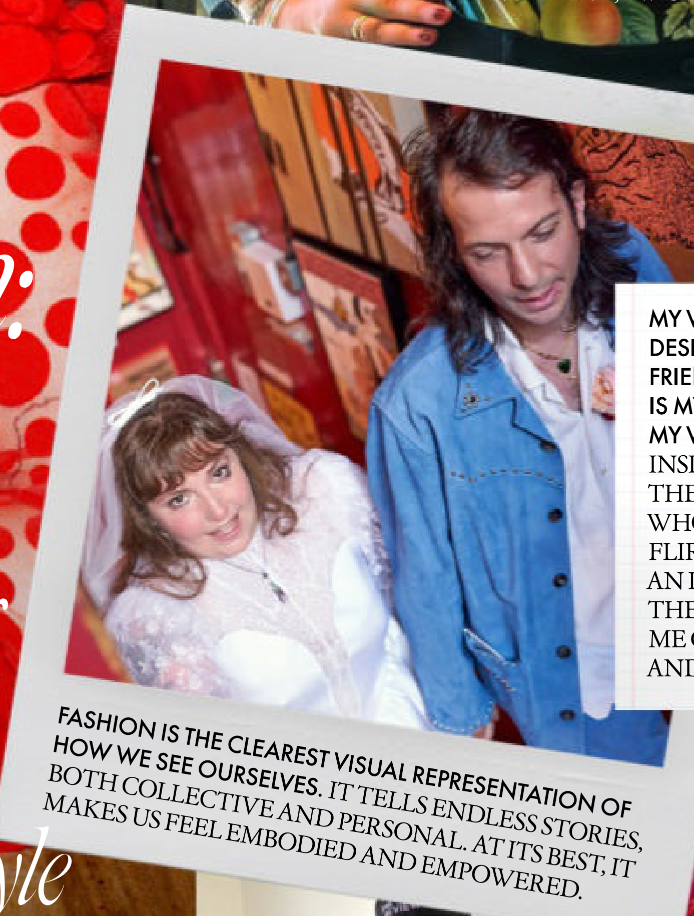
THE FUTURE OF FASHION IS ABOUT ACCESS. ACCESS TO ETHICALLY SOURCED AND MADE ITEMS AT AN ACCESSIBLE PRICE POINT, ACCESS TO DESIGNER COLLECTIONS AT ANY SIZE. EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE THE SAME SUPPLIES TO DRAW FROM, TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD OF STYLE.

My life in fashion: Lena Dunham

From the rainbow skirt she still misses to her Christopher Kane wedding dress, the writer/actor/director shares how she finds joy through style

INTERVIEW BY ENI SUBAIR

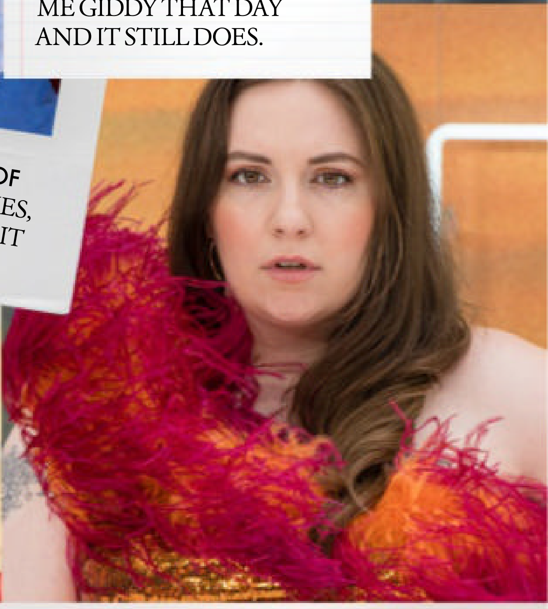
I NEVER LEARNED THE RULE ABOUT TAKING ONE ACCESSORY OFF BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HOUSE. FOR MY CLASS PHOTO WHEN I WAS SEVEN, I WORE A NEON BLOUSE WITH A NECK RUFFLE, A HEADBAND WITH VELVET ROSES AND A SKIRT COVERED IN RAINBOW PAILLETTES. I LOOK AT THE PHOTO NOW AND THINK, I WISH I HAD IT IN MY SIZE.



PAINTED
BY
CHRISTOPHER
KANE,

MY WEDDING DRESS, DESIGNED BY MY DEAR FRIEND CHRISTOPHER KANE, IS MY FAVOURITE PIECE IN MY WARDROBE. IT WAS INSPIRED BY BRIDES OF THE EARLY SEVENTIES WHO WORE SHORT, FLIRTY LOOKS THAT HAD AN INNOCENCE TO THEM. THE DRESS MADE ME GIDDY THAT DAY AND IT STILL DOES.

FASHION IS THE CLEAREST VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF HOW WE SEE OURSELVES. IT TELLS ENDLESS STORIES, BOTH COLLECTIVE AND PERSONAL. AT ITS BEST, IT MAKES US FEEL EMBODIED AND EMPOWERED.



AS WE GET OLDER, WE WALK AROUND WITH SO MANY OTHER PEOPLE'S IDEAS AND RULES IN OUR HEADS – A WHOLE CHAOS OF VOICES. JUST CLEARING YOUR MIND AND TUNING IN TO WHAT SPARKS JOY IS THE MOST SURE-FIRE WAY TO FEEL FABULOUS. WHEN I GO TO SET OR A PARTY FEELING LIKE MYSELF, I NOTICE IT MAKES OTHERS HAPPY, TOO.

I ALWAYS GET DRESSED TO MAKE MYSELF SMILE, AMUSE PEOPLE AND INVOKE A CHARACTER. I LOVE THAT MY JOB IS AN EXTENSION OF THAT – FLESHING OUT A CONCEPT THROUGH FASHION. THE FLIP SIDE IS DRESSING FOR EVENTS, WHEN THE CLAWS CAN COME OUT.

RUBBERIST
LOONER

EVERYONE LOOKS AT OLD PHOTOS OF THEIR PARENTS AND MARVELS AT HOW COOL THEY WERE. MINE WERE *COOL* COOL. THEY STILL ARE. BOTH MY PARENTS ARE ARTISTS AND THEY HAVE A MASTERFUL AESTHETIC. THEIR CLOTHING DOESN'T REALLY WORK ON MY BODY, BUT I HAVE SOME BEAUTIFUL PIECES FROM THEM.

PHOTOGRAPHS: OK MCCAUSLAND/NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX/ EYEVINE, JONNY RUFF, LENA DUNHAM, GETTY IMAGES

ELLE SPORT
ELLE SPORT
SUMMER in PARIS
www.ellesport.co.uk | elleboutique.com | #parisiananywhere

ELLE is a trademark owned by HACHETTE FILIPACCHI PRESSE, France.

GUCCI
FLORA
GORGEOUS JASMINE
The New Eau de Parfum
#FloraFantasy